

THE 38TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION (WW II) MAY, 2011



FROM OUR PRESIDENT

2011 REUNION: Rich Gaeto and Grant Nelson have planned a super Reunion in Seattle, WA 28 September - 1 October 2011 at the "Best Western Executive Inn". Registration and other reunion details are provided in a separate packet with this Newsletter. Also, for late breaking reunion news information on the reunion may be obtained from the "News" menu of our website www.sunsetters38bg.com

There is a lot to do and see in Seattle during our two days of tours: Seattle has a tall "Space Needle" only a few blocks from the hotel and individuals may elect to visit it on their own. It has a restaurant and bar; plus, a great view of the city.

Please make your reservations now by calling the hotel directly at 206-448-9444 between 9 am- 4 pm PST. The rate is \$98 (plus tax) - single or double occupancy The rate is for three days before and three days after the Reunion based on availability at the time of reservation. So get your reservation in early. CALL YOUR RESERVATION IN NOW.

"38th BG HISTORY: The status of our getting an agreement with Larry Hickey has been ongoing. Much progress has been made and we do have a written agreement, which would allow us to publish our own "Limited Edition" of our book for 38th Bomb Group Association Members and their families. We are hoping to have good news to report by the time of the Reunion in Seattle or before. **Check the news in column 1 of page 3. It is good news!!**

SECRETARY/TREASURER: Orland Gage continues to do a super job handling our finances. See page 3 for his Association Finance Report.

38th BG WEBSITE: Tom Behrens with the help of Orland Gage has produced one of the best sites on the web. The site rating remains high. Statistics show there are 370 visitors, who collectively view over 1.200 website pages. In addition, all of our 38 BG Newsletters are now posted on the website and available for you to read and/or copy even before you receive your snail mail copy. You can help to make the website even better by sending, tapes and/or DVD interviews to Tom Behrens. You may email Tom at Tom@TomBehrensUSA.com

Check out our website: www.sunsetters38bg.com You will like it.

(Continued page 2, FROM OUR PRESIDENT)

IN THIS ISSUE

FROM OUR PRESIDENT Page 1

OUR EVER HONORED Page 1

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK Page 2

OUR BOOK Page 3

SECR./TREAS. REPORT Page 3

DOOLITTLE PILOT/ REUNION SKR. DIES Page 3

SURVIVAL Page 3

SKEDADDLE TO SEATTLE
Sept. 28
To
Oct. 1
2011 Reunion
38th BG

IN EVER HONORED MEMORY

Our President has furnished the following list of named member comrades who have passed on to their final Post as reported to him since our previous listing. Their names have been added to the list of our "Ever Honored Comrades".

Howard C. Troy	70th	TOTAL TO DATE Headquarters 22 69 th Squadron 3 70 th Squadron 63 71 st Squadron 179 89 th Squadron 1 405 th Squadron 213 822 nd Squadron 108 823 rd Squadron 113 Honorary 1 Unit unknown 2
James W. Cronn	71 st	
Issadore (Izzy) H. Lodawer	71 st	
Milton D. Brogley	405 th	
John (Bob) P. Lubach	405 th	
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We solicit your comments or notes of errors and the submittal of your stories or items of interest. We reserve the right to reject items and the right to edit items for space and suitability.

We also reserve the right to alter names or other details that might cause embarrassment to individuals or family members.

FROM OUR PRESIDENT*(Continued from pg. 1)*

AGENDA FOR BUSINESS MEETING: There are two major topics to be discussed at our Seattle business meeting. The first is driven by the currently low interest rate on our investments and the \$100 prepaid by a life member. The present low rate does not return sufficient funds to cover the cost for printing and mailing their newsletters and it has been proposed that Life members and widows start paying \$10 a year.

The second major topic involves keeping our 38th BG Association going. A proposed updating of our Constitution will be presented at the Reunion. This revision will permit members of a veteran's family (spouse, children, grandchildren) to become full members of the Association with voting rights and eligibility to hold any office. This will enable the continuing of the Association with the younger generation carrying forward the heritage of the 38th Bomb Group. This proposed revision will not change our non profit status with the IRS.

The election of new officers for the 2012/2013 term is another important item on the agenda. We need volunteers to carry us forward.

If anyone has any comments related to these items or has any agenda items for discussion at the Seattle Business Meeting, please send them to me. My email is: **jackdet@hawaii.rr.com**

In closing, please remember to say a prayer for our troop who are in harms way fighting for this great country of ours - The United States of America.

See you in Seattle at our 2011 reunion. It will be a good one. Be there or be square!

*Jack DeTour***FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK***David Gunn*

WE NEED YOUR STORIES FOR SHARING ON THESE PAGES WITH OUR OTHER MEMBERS. We need your stories if we are to have a newsletter. If you have forgotten those long ago years, tell us what you have been doing.

I have had a lifelong interest in history. Most of my reading is focused on events of yesteryear and history as it is being made day by day. The events that brought about the formation of our nation are fascinating and the lives of those involved are of absorbing interest.

We cannot really understand what our nation is and who we are without some acquaintance with those events and people who have gone before us. Not all of the people are highly notable or well known. Some of the greatest episodes involve people of little note.

Such is the story of those who flew long hours and nearly every day for 320 days from June of 1948 to May of 1949 - the men and women who made the story of the Berlin Airlift. Many of the people I see every day do not even know what the Berlin Airlift was.

I was recently browsing the book table of a local COSTCO and picked up a small paperback with the title DARING YOUNG MEN by Richard Reeves. After scanning a couple of pages, I was captured.

The book has enough of the international political scenario to furnish a good understanding of what was involved. But most of the pages are filled with tales of what it took to bring together the men and equipment and planes to make 277,500 flights into and out of three small airports in West Berlin, a hundred miles into Soviet occupied Germany. The operation moved 2.3 million tons of cargo, night and day, in all kinds of weather through the summer and winter of those 320 days.

Men were called back into the Military from their airline pilot duties or other civilian jobs with as little as three hours of notice. Planes were di-

(Continued page 4, From the Editor)

OUR BOOK

The 38th BG Association has reached a formal agreement with Larry Hickey and his company that clears the way for publication of our history by the Association. The book is being finalized under Association direction and the Book Committee has every hope and intention of having the book ready for distribution this Fall.

Watch our web site for further details. These details will be provided to all by a special mailing within a few weeks.

SECRETARY/TEASURER REPORT

We may have made a mistake by asking who would accept a digital copy of the newsletter. The January and May newsletters would have to be a paper copy because of the volume and type of information included with the newsletter.

I will attempt to publish the information on my printer and insert it with the newsletter at the Printer who will mail the newsletter from their shop.

I wish to thank those members who sent in extra money to help publish the newsletter. We have a few members who have not paid their biennial dues and they will be dropped from the roster.

We have found that some of our members who lived with a family member are deceased and their death was not reported.

Financial Report for 20 January to 19 April

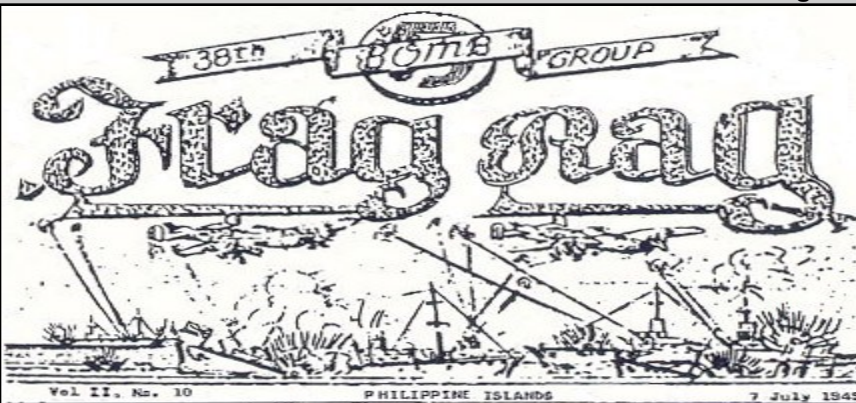
Opening Balance	\$65,666.42
Interest earned 1st Quart.	28.57
Net additions & withdrawn	<7,130.77>
Balance, 19 April	\$59,564.22

DOOLITTLE PILOT AND REUNION SPEAKER DIES

Col. William (Bill) Bower, the pilot of the 12th B-25 on that never-to-be forgotten day in April, 1942. died on 10 January at his home in Boulder, Colorado, at the age of 93. All B-25 organizations have a special place in their thoughts for the men who flew that "impossible mission."

Bill bombed an oil refinery and other facilities on the Yokohama docks and a weather boat in the sea off the China coast. Following his return later in 1942 to the States, he married and then Commanded a bomb squadron involved in the North African invasion, remaining in the North African and Italian theater until September 1945.

Bill was the speaker at the 38th BG Reunion in Colorado Springs in 2002.



SURVIVAL

Bill Kenealy recalled a mission when the crews found themselves over a target with an escort of what seemed to be P-40s.

"When they started coming in on us, I felt different. I felt like the early wagon trains with Indians circling about. I remember phosphorous bombs being dropped from above and the plane on our left going down burning . . . I can still see aircraft on the ground with triangle engine stands and pulling up to clear them.

"When we left the target it seemed we went out over water and running wide open for a long time with our Jap escort.

"When the Japs finally went home, we climbed to altitude in bad weather. We had no radio contact and did not know that we were to land at Dobodura. So we continued over the mountains for Port Moresby. We were very low on gas and felt we had cleared the mountains so started to let down.

"We suddenly saw the mountains straight ahead. We gave full throttle and climbed as much as possible without stalling. It felt as if we were dragging our tail in the trees.

"After gaining altitude and clearing the mountains, we did not want to try that again so we decided to jump. We were high enough that, with the bottom hatch off, we had a mixture of snow and rain.

"I remember swinging a lot before finally coming out of the clouds and into a mountain top. I landed on the south side of a very steep and rocky slope and small trees.

"I left my parachute hanging in a small tree. I was wearing GI coveralls so had no undershirt or anything to signal passing planes.

"After a couple of days in the jungle, I was following a small stream south and west down the mountain. As the stream became a river, I felt I was on the wrong side and felt I had to cross it soon. I do not swim. I picked up a long pole and used it as a brace against the current.

"In the middle of the stream I lost my balance and went down the river. Every time my head came out of the water I would gulp air and go back to the bottom and jump up again.

"After reaching the other side, I laid on the edge of the river, half in and half out. Three small alligators or crocodiles took off on the run as much frightened as I. I lost all rations in the river.

"For five days I made my way through the jungle. The GI shoes were water soaked and the heels were cutting into the sides of my heels. Rain every night. I felt like a garbage pail. As the lightning would flash I was completely surrounded by every kind of bug and mosquito, and ticks."

From another source, Bill's pilot related that Bill reported that he resorted to eating Kunai Grass because he was so hungry. Though filling, the grass gave him no strength. He then says that he ate the abundantly available large black ants which did seem to give him strength. He later told his pilot, "You know you have to kill them good or they bite to beat the hell when you try to swallow them.

"On the fifth day, I ran into a native man, woman and children walking on a path. I had a coconut which I could not open. I held it out to the native; he took it and broke it open on a stake in the ground. I drank the

(Continued page 4, SURVIVAL)

FROM THE EDITOR *(Continued from pg. 2)*

verted from assignments in all parts of the world.

The Germans could not understand why the Americans, who had been bombing night and day and bringing unimaginable destruction only three years earlier, would go to such lengths to keep west Berlin, and indeed, West Germany free. They also could not understand the humor that the Americans displayed under such tremendous pressure.

A ground flight controller was heard telling a pilot that he was a minute early and to make a 360 degree turn before landing. The pilot replied, "A 360 turn will take two minutes." Shortly the ground controller said, "OK, do a 180 and back it in."

All flights were on instrument conditions and controlled from the ground.

Many German mechanics were hired to perform maintenance work. Of the few suspected cases of sabotage, none was ever proven. German civilians were engaged to repair and improve the Berlin airports even while they were operating under heavy traffic.

Lessons learned during this critical operation became the foundation for the current air traffic control system that allows our major airports to handle heavy traffic effectively.

General Lucius Clay, Governor of the American zone of Germany and in Berlin, instituted the air lift when Russian blocked all highway, rail, and canal traffic into Berlin in May of 1948. He was determined that the Russians would not push the western allies out of Berlin. President Truman was equally determined, even though nearly all of his military and diplomatic advisors were opposed to the operation.

Because of their steadfastness the Russians were forced to back down in this first battle of the Cold War. But it took many years before they finally surrendered.

East Germany finally became part of the modern Germany and Berlin became the Capital of the united German Republic.

Reeves writes in such a fashion that I found it difficult to lay the book down when I needed to hit the hay.

Most people will enjoy this story from 63 years ago. Pilots will not only enjoy it but often shake their heads as they read of a time when men in undeclared war had to perform duty that was often worse and more dangerous than combat flying.

SURVIVAL*(Continued from pg. 3)*

milk and some of the meat. The woman took the rest of it and put it in a net on her back.

"They took me to their village, got a log canoe. A couple of natives took me to 30 Mile field."

MORE SURVIVAL - More than five months

Jerry Migliacci related the following story after his return.

"I was flight navigator in the lead plane. We had hit our target when I noticed at least 50 Zeros ride in for the attack on our group. Our wingmen were getting the worst of it so we rode into battle.

"We sent four Zeros crashing into the sea and got two more 'probables.' Then our B-25, riddled with bullets, had one engine set afire. Our pilot made a controlled crash landing in the water, but not before we got the Zero that got our engine.

"Out plane sank almost immediately. I worked myself out of the plane, pulling the engineer with me. I had been giving him first aid in the plane. He died in my arms in the water. Then I began to swim; and swim I did—for seven hours.

"It was just getting dusk when I hit land. And I lost no time in crawling across the beach into the jungle. For two days I was without food or water. Then those ominous-looking natives hove into sight. Was I scared? What do you think? But they turned out to be friendly.

"The next day we ran into another group of natives, Who did they have but one of our Sergeants, a gunner. All of us were then taken to the chief "Lulai", the head man of all that region.

"We were well fed: roast pig, yams, and native foods. Under the circumstances, it was delicious. The best evidenced of its value - I didn't lose any weight. We were entertained nightly with their sing-sings.

"But it wasn't all fun, not by a long shot. Every day we would get news of approaching Japs. And on the run we'd go, directed to some new hiding place by the natives. Thanks to them, I'm here today.

Rescued From Turbulent River

In May of 1944, The 38th Flight echelon was ordered to Merauke. All the planes made it except one which was forced to make an emergency landing in the Turama River. All escaped the plane with minor injuries and reached shore of the river, extremely turbulent because of heavy rain. Rafts and rations were dropped to them by one plane which saw their need but was forced to leave because of darkness.

At Merauke, Col. Tanberg found the Dutch eager to help. A Naval officer, Lt. DeBruyn, with several years of prewar experience flying Catalinas, took off the following morning with one of the men who had dropped supplies the previous evening, as a spotter.

The weather was still extremely bad. DeBruyn reached the river and started the search in low visibility and virtually no ceiling. "A flash of bright light shot into the air and fell, trailing a graceful streak of white smoke into the water. . . We circled the waving men and buzzed the river to choose a landing path among the driftwood.

Safely on the water, we taxied toward shore as two rafts cast off and paddled out, fighting against the current not to be swept past us. At the open blister they were caught and helped in to coffee and first aid. The rain fell harder than ever.

DeBruyn gunned his engines and started taxiing up stream to find the others. We taxied faster as he felt his way - then the Cat went up "on the step" and for several miles skidded along the water, just not quite flying.

"We found the others safe and relatively dry at a long thatched building on a tiny rise of dry ground. There was a steep ladder down the muddy bank. With loud encouragement from the natives, they slipped and stumbled down the ladder with their boat and paddled out to us."

Somehow, through the rain and river, DeBruyn took off and set course for Merauke. Over hot coffee and fruit cake, the eight men told their stories - of mosquitoes and noises and a tide which rose ten feet, of stagnant water and weird noises in the night . . .

They had survived!!