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MINUTES OF ST. LOUIS BUSINESS MEETING

The 38th Bomb Group Association (WWII) 2004 Reunion Business Meeting Agenda at the Marriot at the Airport Hotel on Friday September 17, 2004.

1. Meeting called to order by President Dick Fields. Time _8:30 AM
The Invocation was given by Eugene "Chick" Alford of the 405th Squadron.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Reading of Business Meeting minutes of the 2002 Colorado Springs Reunion by Secretary Bill McKinstry. Call for any additions or deletions to the Minutes? No questions and they were accepted as read.
4. Financial Report for 2003/2004 given by Treasurer Bill McKinstry. Questions or comments ?
None Accepted as read .
5. Reading of "Ever-Honored" Members that have passed away during 2003 and 2004. * See list elsewhere.
6. Election of Officers for 2005/2006. NOTE; If we are unable to successfully nominate and elect the required Officers, skip to Item 10.

President __ Jack L. DeTour of the 822nd Squadron.
 Vice-President _ Eugene "Chick" Alford of the 405th Squadron
 Secretary/Treasurer __William J."Bill" McKinstry of the 822nd Squadron.

Squadron Representatives and Alternates. NOTE: (Headquarters includes 69th,70th, 89th Squadron members and Associate & Widows.)

HQ	Thomas D. "Tom" Kirby, Sr.	Alternate	Qarren E. Lee
71st	Steven J."Steve" Kaselak	Alternate	Curtis R. "Curt" Hunt
405th	John J. "Jack" Wilson	Alternate	David J. "Dave" Gunn
822 nd	Zane H. Fehrmann	Alternate	John M. "Jack" Grady
823 rd	Charles T. "Chuck" Conn00er	Alternate	Robert H. "Bob" Lamb

7. Selection of the Reunion site for 2006 and the dates. Without any deliberation or consideration of other possible sites we chose Phoenix, Arizona for our 2006th Reunion. No dates were considered other than the month of October.

8. Old Business

a. Report from the "Saga Book Committee Same old story with the new twist that Hickey's health will take our unfinished book to the grave with him. However Al Kennedy has gotten Hickey's permission to let us have the photos and stories our members have sent him and Al has spent many hours digitizing that information and photos on to CDs and DVDs in chronological order with the thought that a set could be provided for each member of the 38th BG Association. Even though some of our members do not have computers, most libraries do have them available to the general public.

b. Report from the 5th Air Force Foundation Committee To my knowledge, none was given due to our restricted time schedule.

9. New Business

a. Since we had elected the required officers for the Association, there was no discussion of Survey results to Continue or Disband our Association.

b. A motion was made for the 38th's Treasury to pay for the cost of the set of disks and the postage to send them to each member of the Association by Curtis Hunt of the 71st and seconded by Jack Wilson of the 405th. It was passed by voice vote with none against the motion.

10. Outgoing 2003/2004 President Richard C. Field's Remarks. Dick opened his speech with a joke and then remarked at the speed at which the 2 last years passed and the help given by his officers and wished our new President Jack DeTour success for his term. Dick read a very moving poem by the title of "The Poppies Grow in Flander's Field".

11; Incoming 2005/2006 President's Jack DeTour's remarks. Jack thanked Dick and said he was confident that the group would continue successfully and he would do everything in his power to keep it alive.

12. Motion to Adjourn DATE/TIME: 9/17/04 9:24 AM

MIDWAY

Jim Collins and his four crews were given a mission that had never before been attempted by AAF bombers.

In the six months following Pearl Harbor, undermanned and ill-equipped US forces in the Pacific suffered a series of humiliating defeats mitigated only by Jimmy Doolittle's April 18, 1942, raid on targets in the Tokyo area and by the standoff Battle of the Coral Sea in May.

Buoyed by a string of easy Victories, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto sold the Japanese high command on his plan to extend Japan's perimeter by seizing the Midway Islands, our western-most outpost in the Pacific still in American hands, while carrying out a simultaneous diversionary attack on the Aleutians. Yamamoto held all the highcards, or so he thought: numerically superior naval forces--including carrier aircraft that were also qualitatively superior, flown by first-class veteran pilots--and surprise.

He did not know that, several weeks earlier, US Navy crypt-analysts had broken the Japanese code and knew in detail the disposition and timing of the attacks. With that knowledge, Admiral Chester Nimitz judged correctly that the main thrust at Midway would be a carrier battle. He held his three carriers, Enterprise, Hornet, and Yorktown (which Yamamoto thought to be out of action after the Coral Sea), and reinforced Midway as best he could with some 100 aircraft,--many of them obsolete.

On June 4, 1942, the decisive day of the Battle of Midway, a US force of three carriers supported by about 50 other ships engaged the Japanese fleet of 150 ships built around four heavy carriers. Yamamoto's fleet was harassed by AAF B-17s and Navy torpedo bombers that broke his formations; diverted his fighters, and enabled Navy dive bombers to sink the four carriers with the loss of only the Yorktown and one destroyer. Tales of heroism by Navy and Marine aviators, especially the torpedo bomber crews, only 10 percent of whom survived, would fill a book.

Before dawn on June 5, Yamamoto ordered a general withdrawal to save what was left of his fleet. From that day on, Japan was on the defensive in the Pacific. Midway was one of the decisive battles of World War II.

Buried in the many, often disparate, accounts of the battle is the story of a unique mission flown by four AAF B-26 Martin Marauder bombers led by Capt. James J. Collins. In May, Jim Collins, assigned to the 69th Squadron, 38th Bombardment Group, had led the first flight of Australia-bound B-26s from the mainland to Hawaii, for which he was awarded the DFC. A few of the Marauders were detached in Hawaii and jury-rigged to carry torpedoes in anticipation of the attack on Midway. Collins and his crews were given sketchy instruction by the Navy in torpedo bombing, the most nearly suicidal air tactic of the war, but had never dropped a torpedo when a flight of four, commanded by Collins, was sent 1,200 miles westward to Midway on May 29.

Elements of the Japanese naval force were first sighted on June 3. Early the next morning, Jim Collins's B-26s were on runway alert when word came that enemy bombers were approaching Midway. The B-26s took off immediately with no fighter escort and headed for the Japanese carriers that lay 180 miles, to the northwest and that were protected by a screen of fighters and escort ships. As the B-26s approached their target, they were met head-on by Zeros that stayed with them right through a barrage of flak in a desperate attempt to save the carriers.

Collins led his Marauders in a circle over the carriers' screen to set up the long, straight-and-level run essential to the proper functioning of a torpedo. Before the B-26s could release, two were shot down by either fighters or the dense wall of flak erupting from a battleship, the cruisers, several destroyers, and two carriers.

Collins was hit from below, losing his hydraulic system, before he launched his torpedo at an altitude of 200 feet about 800 yards from a carrier. He and the fourth B-26, flown by Lt. James Muri, roared across the fleet with throttles firewalled and made it into an overcast, pursued by an estimated 50 Zeros. Both badly damaged bombers limped back to Midway, where they crash-landed and were junked. Collins's plane was riddled by 186 flak and bullet holes.

Captain Collins was given permission to return to Hawaii on a B-17, pick up another plane, or bomber, and rejoin the battle. The next morning at Hickam Field he was told that none of his B-26s had been expected to survive--and that the battle was over.

On Aug. 4, 1942, Capt. Jim Collins was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for leading "the first torpedo attack ever entered into by an airplane of this type or by the Army Air Forces." Lt. James Muri also received the DSC. According to Air Force historians, the AAF never again sent torpedo-armed bombers into combat. That mission against one of the greatest armadas of naval history is unique in the Air Force chronicle of valor.

Published April 1986. For presentation on this web site, some Valor articles have been amended for accuracy.

Since the publication of the January 2004 newsletter and as of Sept.30th, 2004, we have been informed of these veterans of the 38th Bomb Group that have gone to their final resting place.

"Rest in Peace, Brothers".

Stott, John T.	70th
Young, John T. (LM)	71st
Flannery, George A.	405th
Lackness, Bud	405th
Monroe, George E.	405th
Noser, Wilmer F.	405th
Kochera, John J.	822nd
*Labiak, George	822nd
*Meder, Ralph	822nd
Chamberlain, Merrill E.	823rd
Engan, John N.	823rd
Simmons, John R. (LM)	823rd

JOHN CHOPELAS AN ASSOCIATE

* Not a 38thBG Association Member.

	TOTALS	
HQ 18	71st 146	822nd 86
69th 2	89th 1	823rd 85
70th 58	405th 164	UNK 3

TOTAL = 563 KNOWN VETERANS OF 38THBG

ALSO DECEASED

JOHN CHOPELAS AN ASSOCIATE

The 38th Lament

"Ode to Shanty O'Neill"

The 38th Group's been in Guinea too long
 We're mighty hard up for a drink
 For want of a woman we're all going nuts
 Oh, Shanty please say what you think

There are snakes in the jungle and bugs in the grass
 The mosquitoes have seven inch prongs
 The rain falls in buckets clear up to our ass
 Oh, Shanty we've been here too long

Oh, the airplanes all stink and the pilots all drink
 The navvies don't know where they are
 The bombardiers can't hit a bucket of shit
 Oh, Shanty please send us afar

We've been over Buna, we've been over Lae
 We've been out to sea after ships
 We've been to Gasmata and Vunakanau
 Oh, Shanty it gives us the shits

Now Shanty's our leader, He's Irish they say
 Irish as a banshee's wail
 But take it from us, we know he's just

Half scotch and half ginger ale.

(Written by Lt. Uhler)