Group

823rd Squadron

71st Squadron

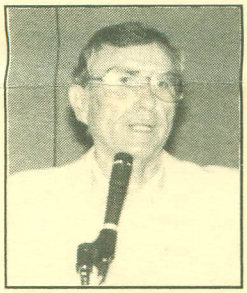
405th Squadron

822nd Squadron

"The Sun Setters"

THE 38TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION (WWII) SEPTEMBER 1992

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



ISHAM M. JOHNSON

This is my last message I will be writing for "The Sun Setters". It has been a great two years for me. Some of you men I knew overseas. A greater number I have met during the four reunions I have attended, especially the one in San Antonio. I take great pride in calling all of you my friends.

My greatest enjoyment during the past years has been working with a great bunch of Association Officers. You have all done an outstanding job. Specifically, my heartfelt thanks to Bill McKinstry for a superior job as our Secretary-Treasurer, and to Lew Pavel, our hardworking and dedicated "Editor-in-Chief", who has a special way of getting all of us to keep sending those cards and letters for "The Sun Setters".

To all our members who support this great organization, I say thanks! Finally, let me say in all sincerity, I am very proud and honored to have been your President.

REUNION '92 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Reunion '92 was a great success - excellent! We had a total of 345 in attendance (190 members), a pretty fair turnout considering 16 members (32 persons) cancelled right up to reunion time because of illness, Huricane Andrew and other problems. All of these have been given a refund. We had 30 former members inquire about the reunion as a result of our publicity in newspapers, magazines, etc. 14 joined as new members and, of these, 9 attended Reunion '92.

Based upon survey responses to date, plus personal contacts, it appears everyone had a most enjoyable time. Seeing old war buddies, telling war stories (most of them factual), meeting old friends and making new ones is what reunions are all about. Right? Right!!

My sincere thanks to all members of the Reunion Committee and their wives for their untiring efforts in planning and executing the entire program.

CONGRATULATIONS

to the new officers of the
38TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION
(WWII)
(* = Re-named)

President - James B. Thoren - 822nd Squadron
8110 S. Possession Road, Cinton, WA 98236
V-Pres. - Grant W. Nelson - 822nd Squadron
Squadron Representatives:

Headquaters Squadron -	* Thomas D. Kirby
71st Squadron -	* Robert Blair
Alternate	-* Eugene E. Benson
405th -	Willian Campbell
Alternate -	Harlan Denning
822nd -	Jack Wallace
Alternate -	Andy Rimar
823rd -	* Dale Howieson
Alternate -	Orland Gage
Editor "The Sun Setter" -	* E. L. (Lew) Pavel

Electees will assume office for their two-year terms on January 1, 1993

LACKLAND/KELLY TOUR

A most interesting Reunion highly was the combined visits to Lackland AFB from the headquarters hotel at 8:00 a.m. and return at 2:00 p.m., Friday, August 28.

Arriving at Lackland Field at 9:00 a.m. the 38th Bombardment Group was seated in a special section and honored by the graduation pageantry. Upon its completion promptly at 8:30, including a salute to the retiring general, the group dispersed to view WWII aircraft of all types circling the parade ground plus the SR71, resting after years of reconnaissance missions and establishing aviation speed records of over 2,000 mph, prior to proceeding to the Officer's Club for a Command Briefing, social hours and lunch.

Pursuant to the Luncheon, the group again boarded the busses to visit the adjacent Kelly AFB for a briefing and tour of Building 374 (Aircraft Production Hanger) conducted by Col. David Zorich, a most knowledgeable officer who guided the group through the C5 reconstruction program (largest cargo plane in the Air Force inventory) and enjoying particularly enthusiastic attention as the son of Sam Zorich, a 38th BG member who served with the 823rd Squadron in WWII. As a climax, tour members gained a dramatic understanding of the magnitude of this C5 Air Force work horse through their visits to the massive cargo hold, the cockpit and the wheel wells provided the capability of the plane to "kneel" to allow it to enter the 2,000 foot long overhaul structure.

REUNION '92 ATTENDANCE

Hyatt Regency Hotel - San Antonio, Texas

WEDNESDAY - August 26

Registration
Mini-Reunions...405th Hospitality Room

THURSDAY - August 27

Squadron breakfast.
Ladies Tour - Alamo, Mission Trail, Los Patios, Art Museum, Japanese Sunken Gardens.
Golf outing at Kelly AFB.
River Barge Cruise -- board at Hyatt Riverwalk.
Reception and Buffet, Hyatt-Regency.
Squadron Hospitality Rooms each night.

FRIDAY - AUGUST 28

Ladies Tour to Fredericksburg, Nimitz Museum.
Parade Lackland Field (guests of honor), WWII aircraft, briefing/lunch at Officers Club.
Tour Kelly Field, huge hangar, C-5 transport.
Social Hour/Dinner, Hyatt-Regency -- BG Harold R. Confer re SR71 (world's fastest plane).

SATURDAY - August 24

Ladies breakfast, Style Show; tour Mexican Market, Cathedral, historic downtown.
Group Business Meeting.
B-25 at San Antonio Airport -- option 20 minute flight on 13-gun WWII bomber.
Social Hour, Banquet, Air Training Command Band "Dimensions in Blue", dancing.

SUNDAY - AUGUST 30

Chapel Service, Col. Bill Montgomery (Ret.).
Executive Board Meeting.

PLAN NOW TO ATTEND THE 1994 REUNION!!

The Reunion '92 Committee deserves heartfelt thanks of all who attended the event as well as those unable to attend since reunions play a most important part in maintaining organizational strength.

The Committee members were:

Isham Johnson, Chairman	- 405th
Gene Swan, Co-Chairman	- 823rd
Darrell Hagler	- 822nd
Bill Leeper	- 71st
Sidney Sampson	- 823rd
Neal Edwards	- 822nd
Bud Lackness	- 405th
Will Turner	- 71st

with invaluable assistance rendered by Janice Edwards, Mat Gac, Ida Hagler, Jack Hart, Billie Johnson, Cindy Lee, Alice Lackness, Frances Leeper, Betty Lange, Cledie McKinstry, Joan Mason, Billie Swan, Thelma Turner.

YOUR 1991-92 ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

President . . . . . **Isham (Ish) M. Johnson**
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Vice President . . . . . **Sidney Sampson**
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Secretary/Treasurer . . . . **William J. McKinstry**
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823rd Sqdn. Rep . . . . . **William E. Hanrahan**
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P.O. Box 416, Simi Valley, Ca 93062
Editor "The Sun Setters" . . . . **E.L. (Lew) Pavel**
P.O. Box 915204, Longwood, FL 32791

ADDITIONAL LIFE MEMBERS

The Association has gained eight new Life Members since the May 1992 listing:

Robert H. Garmoe 71st
William C. Piper, Jr. 71st
Denny Fordyce, Jr. 405th
Coit A. Yeoman 405th
Terrance J. Dolan 822nd
Harold Fliegler 822nd
J. Lee Ranney 822nd
Harold D. Heikes 823rd

The following breakdown by Squadron lists the total number of members who have contributed to the Life Membership Fund:

SQDN — HDQ	71st	405th	822nd	823rd
7	34	56	25	33
DEC'D 1	4	5	2	1

TOTAL 152

"IN EVER-HONORED MEMORY"

Since publication of the May '92 Newsletter, we have been informed of five veterans of the 38th Bomb Group who have gone to their final resting place:

Lewis H. Campbell 405th
Cecil Imler 405th
Richard W. Pritchard 405th
William O. "Red" Donald 823rd
Howard N. Parker 71st
*John T. Scherr ..... HDQ
*Previously listed 5/91 us UNK)

Rest in Peace, Brothers

We appreciate those who have informed us of the passing of our war-time brothers, providing us with the opportunity to honor them and extend our heartfelt condolences to the widows and families. Names for this column should be sent to Secretary Bill McKinstry.

NOTE: Bill McKinstry was in the hospital shortly after the Reunion with a partial artery blockage. The obstruction was removed. He is now home and feeling fine. Your well wishes will be appreciated.

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It is most appropriate that greetings extended by the President to those attending Reunion '92 in San Antonio be shared with all members of THE 38TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION (WWII).

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 7, 1992

I am delighted to send greetings to all those who are gathered in San Antonio for the reunion of the members of the 38th Bombardment Group Association.

World War II was nothing less than a life-and-death struggle over the fate of millions of freedom-loving men and women, and our Nation is forever indebted to those of you who helped to achieve the Allied victory over tyranny. During one of mankind's darkest hours, you defended the sacred light of liberty with your very lives. You met the brutal force of the Axis powers with the best in the American spirit, and your faith, courage, and sacrifices will never be forgotten. They will not be forgotten because they helped to change the course of history. With the defeat of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, the United States entered a new position of leadership in the international arena. Over the years, our Nation has continued to champion democracy and human rights, achieving victory in the Cold War through vigilance and resolve. The collapse of communism and the rise of democracy in nations around the world must be especially gratifying to you, who so bravely defended the cause of freedom half a century ago.

While we have much to celebrate on this occasion, I know that you are also mindful of your comrades who are not with you today: those who fell in the line of duty during World War II and those who have since gone to their final rest. Like you, these fallen heroes demonstrated that we must never take our way of life for granted, and I join with you in honoring their memory.

Barbara and I send best wishes to you on this occasion and for the future.

George Bush

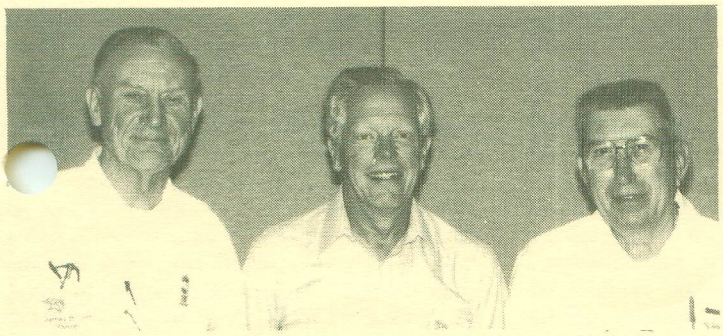
LARRY HICKEY REPORT

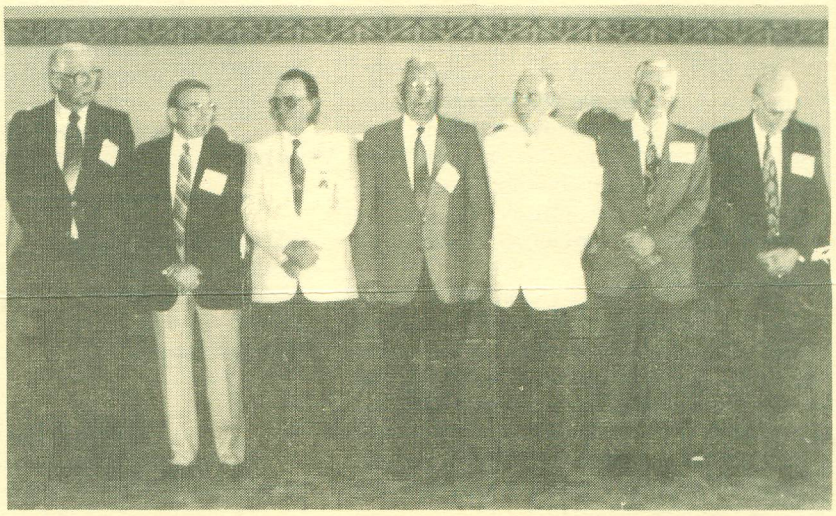
(Author, 38th Bomb Group Book)

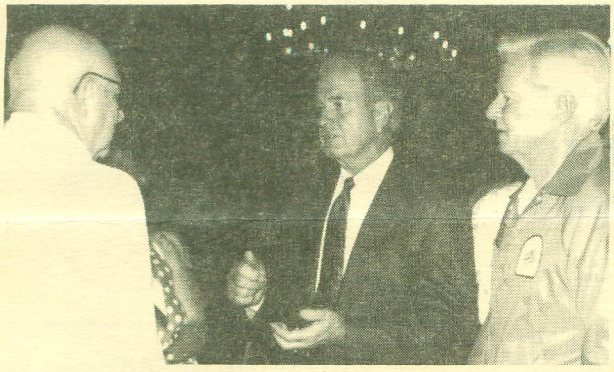
Friday to Sunday to provide a progress report Larry Hickey attended the reunion on the 38th Bomb Group book. An abbreviated extract of his "handout" follows.

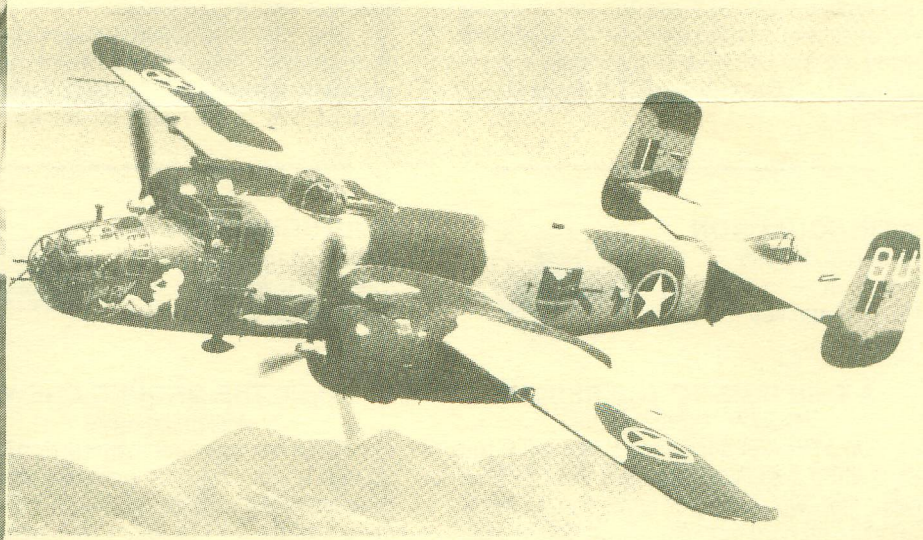
The bad news -- the book is not yet ready for publication! The good news -- he is making steady progress! A serious auto accident 18 months ago incapacitated him for 6 months. Since recovery, he has had to devote an overwhelming amount of time and energy to keep his jewelry manufacturing business (that's how he makes his living) on its feet thru the move into a newly built factory and thru a crushing recession in that industry.

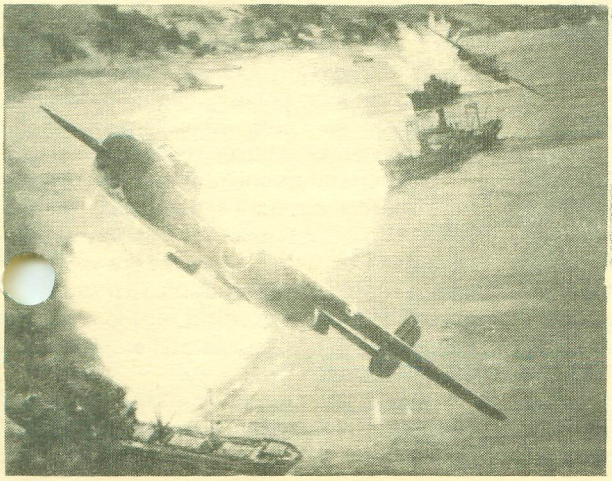
He reports over $40,000 has been spent on research and production of the book, only half covered by pre-publication orders. He recognizes the impatience of early buyers, but is committed to making it the best unit history ever published. To that end he has compared every aerial engagement of the 38th with Japanese against their detailed historical c[illegible] bat records, and has been successful in identifying units and even individuals against whom the men of the 38th fought. He believes this alone will make the 38th book a landmark of WWII combat literature, and thanks all for their patience and support.











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71st SQUADRON

Eugene Benson
Robert W. Blair
Representatives

A SAD DAY

Gene Benson

One of the saddest days of my overseas duty was 4/14/44. My crew was assigned to search for a crew which had been seen getting out of an A-20 and into a life raft after a forced landing in the water off the coast of New Guinea south of Hollandia the previous afternoon.

Our B-25 flew cover for a Catalina PBY flying boat, and because of our greater speed we were able to make S curves covering more area while keeping the "Cat" in sight. After about an hour of searching, we spotted the two crewmen in a life raft. Circling the raft, we signaled the "Cat", which landed and picked up the survivors.

The weather was overcast and a rather stiff wind was blowing and the Cat had a difficult time getting airborne because of the heavy seas. It finally got off but when about fifty feet up, it suddenly stalled out and crashed into the sea, exploding into a huge fireball. I broke radio silence to call our base and after a second explanation of what happened, we were told another Cat was being sent and we should continue to circle the site until it arrived.

We flew as low as possible to check the crash and could see some debris on the water, but no survivors. The second Cat arrived, landed and searched the area but unfortunately with no better luck.

This tragic event demonstrated one of the big reasons for the high morale of air crews in the SWPA - in this case ten Cat crew members gave their lives attempting to rescue two downed airmen. Most of our missions were planned leaving the target area over water since if a plane went down, the chance for crew survival and rescue were very good, a fact to which I can attest since I was one of the fortunate ones who survived because of that tactic and was rescued by a Cat earlier just off Kavieng, New Ireland.

We stayed low for about 15 minutes in case any Jap Zeros hung around, then started climbing up out of the rough air while trying to figure out how to release the bomb. We had no tools but Slye had a very thin dime and thought it might work to get the screws out of the shackle holding the bomb. I held him by the legs with his feet under my arms as he hung down in the bomb bay. He could only work a short time, come up for a rest, then back down again. After about an hour, he came up to report the bomb was gone. It blew up quite far beneath us since we were than at about 15,000 feet.

I felt sure we would have to bail out of that plane. We counted 22 holes down the fuselage and big holes under one wing. Some Jap had done a number on us, but we were lucky, thanks to Dick Slye and a thin dime.

822nd SQUADRON

Grant W. Nelson
James B. Thoren
Jack C. Wallce
Representatives

DOUBLE DUTY

Flying co-pilot with John Collins, we took a ground forces Colonel to Los Negros Island. No sooner had we landed on the short, narrow strip than we were contacted by the ground forces asking whether we could drop bombs from our plane. We assured them we could, and an armament man promptly supplied us two bombs (250- or 500-pounders) loading of which was a feat initself.

We took off with an infantry Captain who knew the target, made a practice run over it, and the second time around dropped one of the bombs. The Captain was very pleased, so we hit the target the second time around per his instructions, then back to the little landing strip about 1/4 mile from the fighting. Operational time was about 20 minutes.

The infantry Captain requested a repeat performance. They loaded two more bombs and we hit the target again - two missions in 40 minutes. Would they were all that easy.

and the potato mixture served in the mess hall became inedible in a very short time. Occasionally a "fat cat" (usually a B-25 to be modified) would fly to Townsville and upon return would load up with fresh vegetables, meat and beer for the squadron, but these bona[illegible] were few and far between and many o[illegible] flight line personnel survived on the emergency rations salvaged from the plane's life rafts. Such rations were seldom of moment since if a B-25 ditched in the water, the crew was picked up relatively quickly by the Japanese or by our own rescue teams and rarely, if ever, had a chance to use them.

Flight crews were afforded periodic trips to Australia to regenerate their bodies but R & R trips were infrequent for ground personnel. Some units constructed stills from aircraft parts and brewed their own moonshine mixed with powdered juice from rations for flavoring. Grains for these concoctions were usually supplied by crews returning from Australia and generally tasted better than the Corio whiskey available there.

Rearming 25's, with their tremendous appetite for 50 caliber ammunition, and loading bombs required strenuous efforts by ground personnel, and was usually accomplished in the evening or night after the target and type of bomb load was assigned by Bomber Command.

Waiting for their assigned aircraft to return from a mission was a time of anxiety for ground crews since any discrepancies in performance or damage to the unit had to be corrected immediately to assure maximum squa[illegible] strike capability with the limited equipment available. Their heroic efforts to keep "their" planes in the air were, in essence, comparable to those of the men who took the planes over the targets and are certainly most deserving of recognition.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

Tom Kirby Representative

No Report

405th SQUADRON

Robert F. Fugua
Ted Rich
Representatives

A THIN DIME TO THE RESCUE

Coyt A. (Bud) Yeoman

On a Wewak mission to strafe the Dagua Strip with Louis Rice-Pilot and Richard Slye - Navigator, we made our bomb run and knew we were hit hard because we could see holes just back of the cockpit as we broke off over the water. Slye checked the bomb bay and reported a 250-lb bomb hung up in the rack. Our electrical system was shot out - one end of the bomb released while the other end hung up with just two inches of the fuse wire being pulled out of the fuse.

823rd SQUADRON

William Hanrahan
Dale W. Howleson
Representatives

HAIL THE GROUND CREWS

William Hanrahan

Ground support personnel at Port Moresby worked under the most primative conditions imaginable, fighting off hordes of mosquitoes while striving for maximum readiness of assigned aircraft. Early morning hours were shattered by the moanings of B-25s being power-checked for the day's mission, with that lonely sound always resulting in a touch of queasiness of flight crews in anticipation of the target and the weather conditions for that day.

The steady diet of Australian corned beef

THE EDITOR SPEAKS

Member efforts to obtain Reunion '92 listings in various publications was much appreciated and Chairman Johnson's attendance report proves such publicity can be productive. (In '86 an "Air Force" squib took me to the Anaheim reunion -- haven't missed one since!)

If some articles don't come in, you're going to get a lot of the editor's experiences -- fact OR fiction. Your most eventful mission already covered? Hey, YOUR angle makes your [illegible] unique -- send it in. We may hold it a while [illegible] too similar to a recent article, but there's an old theater saying -- "If the cast is different, so is the play!' We need YOUR story.

Oops! We by-lined the May "Detached Duty" story Bill Garland instead of BILL WILSON!!!