



SUNSETTER'S GAZETTE

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



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2005

VOLUME XXIV NUMBER 1

Iwo Jima 60th Anniversary Celebrations



National Archives

There are several 60th Anniversary Iwo Jima events occurring this upcoming February and March. Three of the most significant events are listed below:

1) 2/17-2/20 Wash DC - Is a memorial service at the Marine Iwo Jima Memorial in DC followed by a Banquet and side tours of DC
Price: Reunion Registration: \$60.00
Ticket(s) for Reception \$30.00 ea
Ticket(s) for Commemorative Ceremony/Wreath Laying Marine Corps/WWII War Memorials \$30.00 ea
Ticket(s) for Reunion Reception and Banquet. \$55.00 ea
Total = \$175
Optional Tour I: National Air & Space Museum (\$30.00 ea)
Optional Tour II: Visit to the National Museum of the Marine Corps (\$30.00 ea)
Contact: Jerry Brown Military Reunions LLC
PO Box 221034
Chantilly, VA 20153-1034
Phone: 866-242-2179

2) 2/19-20 Fredericksburg Texas at The National Museum of the Pacific War -
Saturday, February 19 is a heroes' parade down Main street at 10:00 a.m. The event will feature Iwo Jima heroes

as well as World War II vehicles and equipment and a flyover by World War II aircraft. Also on Saturday, several hundred volunteers, led by museum staff, will stage two large-scale reenactments, recreating the fighting around the base of Mount Suribachi and the two flag raisings. Central Texas terrain in Doss, Texas, will become the famous battlefield complete with Japanese pillboxes and defenses and WWII aircraft and vehicles, including tanks, halftracks, trucks, jeeps and numerous flamethrowers. Participants include re-enactors from the U.S., Japan, Australia, Korea and Taiwan. The living history demonstration will be dedicated to the heroes of Iwo Jima and special transportation and seating will be provided for Iwo Jima veterans and their registered guests.

Sunday, February 20, the public will honor the brave men and women from all branches of the armed forces who fought at Iwo Jima at a special memorial service. The program also will include author James Bradley and special guest Hershel Williams, one of only three living Medal of Honor recipients from Iwo Jima. The event is open to the public without charge, with special seating for registered Iwo Jima veterans.

Contact Shirley Wills at 210-826-2956

3) 3/7-14 Guam and Iwo Jima - Ever wanted to visit Iwo Jima or take a family member to the island you spent so much time on in 1945? Well, this year, the 60th Anniversary of the battle of Iwo Jima, just may be your best opportunity. The island is "open" one day each year and Military Historical Tours, Inc., (MHT) is the only tour company that can take you there. In 2005, that day is March 12th. MHT's tour includes round-trip air from the mainland U.S. to Guam, accommodations at the Outrigger Guam Resort and a chartered Continental flight to/from Iwo Jima. There will be historical tours of Guam, a visit to Andersen AFB, and banquets to attend. All meals (except a couple of lunches and dinners on your own) are included. An entire day (March 12th) is spent on Iwo Jima. Following a morning ceremony, you will be free for the balance of the day to visit the historical sites on the island or for personal exploration. Transportation around the island will be by military vehicles supplied by the USMC. Cost: \$3495/person. Optional pre-tour to Saipan-Tinian and post-tour to Hawaii are also offered. Time and space are getting short. Visit www.miltours.com or call 1-800-722-9501 for details.

I plan on attending #2, the Fredericksburg anniversary and am seriously thinking about #3. If any of you will be going, let me know.

WELCOME

- Welcome to the 386th Air Service Group -

Thanks go out to Col Robert Krueger of the 386th Air Service Group for providing me with the contacts so that I could add the 120 members of the 386th ASG to the 7th Fighter Command Association. Bob has been a member of the 7th FCA for many years and it was just recently that I discovered that there were many more members of the 386th that needed to be brought into the fold of the 7th. The 386th ASG disembarked onto Iwo Jima on D+5 and found themselves in the middle of an epic battle. They were then enjoined to aid the Marines by helping re-supply, take the wounded out to aid stations, and do whatever other task developed. The men of the 386th worked well beyond the call of duty. After Iwo was secured, the 386th got down to the job of supporting the 15th Fighter Group on Iwo Jima.

Welcome 386th brothers, 60 years is a long time to be apart.

MEMORIES

- Star of the Pacific -

Final part of the story of Todd Moore and his time with the 7th Fighter Command

Written by Tom Ivie and published with his permission

Four hundred B-29s were heading toward the target of Yokahama escorted by 101 Mustangs of the 15th and 21st Fighter Groups. To meet them was one of the largest fighter forces assembled by the Japanese in quite some time. As soon as the Japanese saw our bombers, they struck swiftly and a large air battle began. Captain Moore's flight was escorting the first section of bombers as they headed toward the target, and as they approached Atsugi airfield at 20,000 feet three Zekes were seen. These enemy fighters had already been engaged by the 78th FS so Captain Moore ignored them, and signaled his flight to go after the three Jacks that he had seen at 10 o'clock. He picked the lead Jack and told his men to attack the number three man. Captain Moore climbed after his target and opened fire at 45 degrees deflection. Parts of the enemy fighter were blown away, and its pilot made a hasty exit from his doomed plane. After finishing off the first Jack, Captain Moore then charged after the second Jack which went into a vertical dive. Captain Moore followed and after closing to 900 feet clobbered the enemy fighter with one burst. After this engagement he formed up the flight and continued the escort. They flew back and forth along the bomber stream for about fifteen minutes, and as they passed over Yokahama Captain Moore observed two Kawanishi Georges. They were at 2 o'clock from Red Flight in an orbit. He quickly turned after one George, but it split-essed away. Captain Moore then turned his attention to the second George which was closing on him. They closed to a very short range but the Japanese pilot was not able to bring his plane into firing position. Captain Moore fired a short burst and blew a large hole in the George's wing. With his second burst Captain Moore delivered a fatal blow, and the Japanese pilot jumped as his plane lurched

out of control. Another George tried to make a pass at Captain Moore but was driven off by the pilots of Red Flight.

After the last enemy aircraft was driven off, Captain Moore then led his flight back to the rally point, En route to the rally point they were involved in one more brief encounter when Red Flight tried to chase off a Zeke which had attacked and heavily damaged Lt. R. R. Moore's Mustang. Captain Moore drove the Zeke off, but it was too late and Lt. Moore's P-51 fell to the earth carrying him along with it.

Against the loss of one pilot and two Mustangs, the 15th Fighter Group scored fifteen kills, five probables, and damaged twelve others. With his three victories Todd Moore passed Major Jim Tapp and became the Group's leading ace.

The enemy fighter pilot could be tough and aggressive at times as seen in the missions of 7 April and 29 May, but to the VLR pilot the elements could sometimes be a tougher foe. Flying seven- to eight-hour missions in the cramped, uncomfortable cockpit of a single-engined fighter was hard enough. In addition to that the VLR pilot had to face 1,600 miles of over-water flight, treacherous wind currents, and horrendous storm fronts. They were exhausting missions, and because of this, the pilots were limited to six VLR missions a month.

Todd Moore said of the missions, "The VLR missions from Iwo Jima were of 7-9 hours duration. Needless to say the missions were exhausting from a physical standpoint—not to mention the mental anguish involved. We were issued Benzedrine pills to take after leaving the target. There was a tendency to relax too much after leaving the target and getting to a safe distance out to sea on the way back to Iwo. The Benzedrine, of course, would not let you go to sleep while flying, but had some real deleterious effects on sleeping at night after the mission.

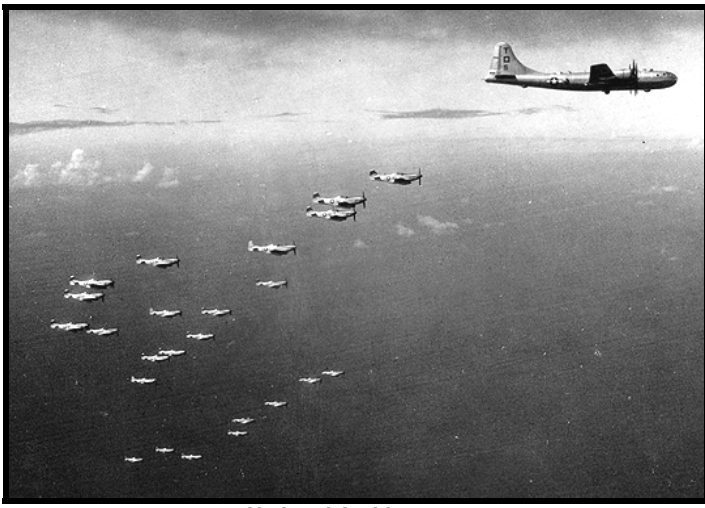
"However, flying long missions over water in a single-engine fighter is good for at least one thing. I guarantee you that when you have done this for three years, you will never run out of gas in an automobile."

Even the three years of flying over the Pacific and experiencing its fickle weather couldn't truly prepare Todd Moore and his fellow pilots for the events of 1 June 1945.

On this date the 7th Fighter Command dispatched 148 Mustangs from the 15th, 21st and 506th Fighter Groups to escort B-29s striking at Osaka. When they were about 250 miles out of Iwo they started to encounter layers of clouds, but the weather B-29 ahead of them said everything was okay so they continued on.

Shortly thereafter the Mustangs encountered a solid front reaching, by some accounts, from the sea up to 35,000 feet. As they entered the storm front, the little Mustangs were tossed about like toys by the extreme turbulence. The decision was quickly made to abort and get out of there. Trying to maneuver a great number of planes while flying virtually blind compounded the problem, and as a result twenty-seven fighters were lost, either to the weather or mid-air collisions. Twenty-four pilots were lost, ten of them by the 15th FG. One of the lucky survivors was Lt. Burry of Major Todd Moore's Red Flight, who was picked up six days later by a submarine.

The mission of 1 June had been a sad and sobering affair.



National Archives

The loss of aircraft and life was the largest suffered by 7th Fighter Command since the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and graphically points out the natural dangers faced by the pilots of Iwo Jima.

The Mustangs did not return to Japan until 7 June, and on this date the target was again Osaka. The escort was again provided by all three Mustang groups. The mission began badly for the 15th FG as one of the 47th FS pilots crashed on takeoff, and eight other planes had to abort en route to the rendezvous. At the point of rendezvous the gremlins continued—this time in the form of weather. A huge cloud cover, which hung as high as 15,000 feet completely covering the target area. At this point the 15th FG climbed to a higher altitude and watched the bomber strike force as it flew through the clouds and flak bursts. In the middle of this show one Japanese pilot flying a twin-engined Nick interceptor tried to make a pass at the bombers. For the Japanese pilot it was very bad timing, because within seconds he was spotted and gunned out of the sky by Todd Moore.

Two days later the 15th Fighter Group was again heading for Japan. This mission was a fighter sweep of Atsugi airfield near Tokyo. Many Japanese fighters were up and were preparing to bounce the B-29's which were bombing targets in the Tokyo area. The Japanese apparently thought they were going to be attacking unescorted bombers, and were caught by surprise when the 15th FG jumped them at 15,000 feet. The 47th FS initiated the action and scored a number of kills as the 45th FS was arriving on the scene. Todd Moore was leading the squadron and immediately notified his men to follow him into the fray. As they charged into the formation of Japanese Ki-84 Franks, Major Moore picked out his target and blasted the Frank out of the sky for his eleventh victory.

Shortly after this mission, Major Moore was rewarded with a month's leave for rest and recuperation.

In mid-July 1945, Todd Moore returned to the 45th Fighter Squadron and assumed command of the squadron on 19 July. For the next few missions he led his squadron to various targets in Japan, but in these waning days of the war aerial encounters were getting scarcer and scarcer. It was not until 10 August that the opportunity would rise again. On this mission they were escorting bombers to targets in Tokyo. Just before reaching the target a handful of Japanese fighters tried to attack the bombers. Their

attack was uncoordinated and poorly carried out, and did not hinder the B-29s. However, they left themselves quite vulnerable to our fighters, and four of the Japanese fighters were damaged by pilots of the 47th FS. Major Moore led his 45th FS in the second attack against the Japanese fighters, and in doing so destroyed a Ki-44 Tojo for his twelfth and final victory of the war.

Four days later the 15th FG participated in its last mission of the war. Rumors were already circulating that the surrender was coming, but the Mustangs headed for their strafing targets in the Nagoya area anyway. They were told to break off if they heard the code word UTAH and come back, but when they reached the target area it had not sounded. They struck at several targets including airfields, trains, railroad yards, etc., and drew considerable flak. Planes were hit, and as Todd Moore led the 15th FG back toward Iwo Jima numerous calls of "MAY DAY" were heard. Fortunately all of the pilots who went down were rescued by the Navy, and as the pilots were thirty minutes out of Japan on the way back to Iwo Jima, UTAH was sounded. The war was over.

For Todd Moore the war had been a long one. He had served overseas for thirty-seven months, flown 150 combat missions, and became the 7th Fighter Command's highest scoring ace. His final score was twelve aerial victories, one probable, and three damaged. He destroyed an additional three enemy planes on the ground. His efforts earned him the Silver Star, the Distinguished Flying Cross with four Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Air Medal with nine OLCs. He left the service shortly after World War Two and returned to Kentucky to begin his civilian career in business.

-Snap Rolling a P-51-

By Paul Martin - 78th Fighter Squadron

Snap Rolling a P-51 over Japan - One of the other pilots once asked me if I was ever afraid of the P-51. I was quite surprised at his question. I had to answer honestly that no, I never was. Once, well seated and buckled in I became a part of that plane. I knew what its limits were and what it could do. It never occurred to me that it wasn't just a part of me or that it wouldn't tell me when I was nearing its limits. Each P-51 had its own idiosyncrasies and I could allow for that.

The only time I crossed the boundary I nearly killed myself. That was on a strafing run over Japan. I was number four on the run, the last man in, and I had a steam locomotive in my sights - a rather rare event. I got so carried away when I once had it in my sights that I waited too long to pull up, (an inexcusable freshman mistake). I didn't know whether I would make it or not. I was near a high-speed stall and barely a wingspan above the tracks when the plane did a high-speed stall, snapping my wing over vertical to the ground, then recovered and I was away. It was a fortunate maneuver for there were two poplar trees on either side of the tracks, less than a wingspan apart. Had my plane not done that quick snap I think I would most likely have lost my wings, not a pleasant thought. As I climbed to follow my flight I glanced out at the wing and noticed that the rivets in the right wing tip section were all popped and standing like a tiny picket fence. I wish I could have had a look at my gun camera film to see what it

looked like. It must have been interesting.

-Shot Down-

The following account is the second 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.

-July 15, 1945 Strafing Mission-

By Paul Chism - 78th Fighter Squadron

Take off time about 9:30 am. We joined B-29's for flight to Japan. It was a beautiful day, the exact opposite of June 1 when we lost 28 airplanes and 27 pilots to weather. It was an uneventful flight to Japan.

The target was a naval airbase near Nagoya (Okazaki). I was an element leader among the first planes to start strafing runs. I lined up on a twin-engine bomber that appeared to be turning off runway (hindsight makes me think it was a decoy.) I made a long strafing run and numerous hits but it never burned or blew up.

I pulled up from strafing run, and then was a large explosion and the cockpit filled with fire. In five to eight seconds I was out of the plane, having jettisoned canopy, pulled back on stick, released safety belt and went on the side all in one motion. I pulled the ripcord when clear of the airplane and floated to the ground, landing on the airfield a short distance past end of runway. The other aircraft were still strafing and one plane flew by and waved. I was unhurt except for burns on shoulders, arms and both legs.

Having no place to go I just sat there, wondering what next? In about 10-15 minutes about 50 Japanese soldiers came toward me. They cut my knife and gun off my person, blindfolded me and then the fun began. They beat me unconscious. When I came to it was nearly dark and at a different location. After a lot of conversation, all on their part, I was loaded on a truck and carried to a building with 3 cages. They put me in one of the cages tying my hands in front with a rope and securing the other end to the cage bars. I seemed as if everyone on the base came by to look. They would pull me to the bars, spit, hit, and kick me. After two days of this, I was put on a train with an officer and 2 guards for a trip to Prison Camp near Tokyo (Ofuna.) Upon arrival I was put in solitary confinement for several days. During this time I was beaten and interrogated. When this was completed I was placed in a cell about 6' X 8" with a mat on the floor (no furniture.)

Our food consisted of 2 small bowls of rice per day with an occasional fish head. There was no medical attention for the approximate 110 men in the camp. Most of the men who had been there for a while were in poor physical shape.

I was in Ofuna for approximately 26 days before war was over. During that time I lost 35 pounds.

On August 16, 1945 we woke up to find all guards gone and only two officers in the camp. The fences were torn down and we had baths for the first time since I was shot down. Food was plentiful from the Japanese and also from our forces. The Navy was dropping food from torpedo bombers all around us. Most of us were sick from eating and smoking too much.

In a few days, the British arrived and took their people plus 3 Norwegians but would not take the others. Two days later the Navy came in, took their people and left us there. We finally were taken out by the Army on August 30 and taken to Atsugi Airfield where we departed for the Philippines on September 1. I finally arrived home on October 17, 1945.



POW's being released - US Camera Magazine - 1946

Next Issue - Walt Kreimann's sub rescue.....

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

REUNIONS

7th Fighter Command 2004 Reunion

A small, but energetic group of 7th Fighter Command members joined the 330th Bomb Group in the 330th's last Reunion, which was held in Dayton, Ohio on October 13-17, 2004.

Thursday night we enjoyed a welcome Dinner in the hotel ballroom. Ken Werrell, author of "Blankets of Fire" was our speaker.

Friday morning we boarded buses for memorial service at the Wright-Pat AFB chapel followed by a luncheon at the AFB Officers Club. After lunch we returned to the hotel to rest and make new friends with the 330th membership. At 5:00pm we boarded buses for the Air Force Museum for a dinner and tour.

Saturday morning we had an association's business session and voted to keep everything status quo for the time being. At noon we had a special luncheon with Dr. Gaile McCoy, survivor of USS Indianapolis sinking as a speaker. It turned out Dr. McCoy was an ex-Marine sniper who had been on Iwo Jima. Sgt. McCoy had been present during the Japanese Banzai attack on the 26th of March on Iwo and had helped to dispatch many of the attackers. Later I had the privilege of introducing him to Jim Van Nada and Frank Rodgers who were both wounded in the attack on the 21st FG tents. Later that evening we participated in the 330th reunion banquet with speaker: Dave Braden, president, 20th AF Assn.

All in all we had a great time. Approximately 300 330th Bomb Group members and family were in attendance. Those attending for the 7th were: Leon Sher, Frank Rodgers, Mark Stevens, Glorene Stevens, Gordon Scott, Smokey Ellison, Wilma Orr, James Van Nada, Janet Van Nada, James Bradbury, Don Kiggins, Dottie Kiggins, and joining us for lunch were Robert and June Boyer.

386th Air Service Group 2004 Reunion

Sixteen members of the 386th Air Service Group attended the 386th's 2nd reunion that was held in El Paso Texas December 2-5. A great time was had by all. Thanks go out to Rickie Feuille for hosting the reunion. Those attending were; Earl Boyce, Owen & Irene Cain, Rickie & Lou Feuille, Roger Gudahl, Robert Krueger, Mitch & Frances Mekjian, Herschel Miller, Si & Glenda Reid, Ron & Carolyn Villi and AJ & Cookie Westheimer.

78th Fighter Squadron / 7th Fighter Command 2005 Reunion

The 78th Fighter Squadron will be holding a reunion July 27th through July 31st 2005 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The 78th would like to invite other 7th Fighter Command veterans, especially from the Great Lakes regions to join them in their festivities. Activities are still being planned, but will include the Oshkosh EAA show, special tours, good food and renewed friendships.

For more details please contact: Ken Sweet at 414-541-4015

Iwo Jima Veterans & Family Association Reunion 2005 - Washington, DC - 60th Anniversary

Plans for visiting the Iwo Jima & WWII Monument, Annapolis, Marine Barracks, and possibly the White House, This will be a great reunion for veterans, family members and children.

If you would like to become a member it is \$15 per year

Contact: Howard "Phil" Phillips 978 Orangewood Dr. Brea, CA 92821-2514

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Please contact the editor if you have any reunions you would like posted here.

NEWS

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. The username for the on-line roster is **bushmaster** and the password is **snakes**

7th FC Video's

I have been busy compiling many hours of 16mm film from Iwo Jima, Ie Shima and from Gun Camera's. Bob Krueger's (386th) footage of Iwo Jima and Phil Rasmussen's (318th) footage of Ie Shima provides a never before seen insight into everyday life on those bases. Gun Camera footage provided by Jack Lambert showcases 15th and 21st Fighter Group forays over the Empire. The video is 2 hours long and is being offered in VHS format. DVD+R copies are also available but may not work in all DVD players. Since I want to make the footage available to all veterans and their families, I will offer this video to veterans and family **only** for whatever price you can afford. The suggested price for the video or DVD is \$25.00 for 1 copy and \$20.00 for each additional video.

Please address requests to:

Mark Stevens
14629 SE 198th St.
Renton, WA 98058
253-630-3199

Please include what format you would like the video in (VHS or DVD+R) and how many videos you would like to order. Please make checks out to Mark Stevens.

Shipments are planned to begin in Early March or sooner.

LETTERS

Hi, My name is Maury Gallagher. I am a retired Navy Commander who is now working to document casualties of WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and Grenada to determine the names which will be engraved on a veterans memorial we are building to honor the service of Veterans from Allamakee County, Iowa. We are trying to find out some information on a casualty from the 78th Fighter Squadron. His name was Dale James Laughlin. The information we have states that he died off Oahu in the Pacific area on October 25th, 1943. The posting on the WWII Memorial Honor Roll shows that he is classified as "DNB," or Died - Non Battle. Because we will be engraving the names of those Killed in Action on the front of our memorial, and the names of those who "died - non battle" of other causes on the reverse side, we are trying to ensure we have accurate data. We have been unable over the last seven months to locate any relatives who could tell us anything about Dale Laughlin. Just today I found out that he was in the 78th Fighter Squadron, and I found your website. I am hoping that you would have some information on how Dale died, so we can honor his sacrifice properly. Any info you can provide would be greatly appreciated. Thank you very much. Maury Gallagher.

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Dear Fellow Flyers:

I received your Sunsetter's Gazette of the Seventh Fighter Command Association, which contains a date of June 2002 - Vol. XX Number 1. I've read and re-read it and didn't

realize it had been so long ago that I decided to write to you. That issue started off with a letter by Jerry Yellen from the 78th and his familiarization with the Japanese. I became a POW of the Japanese on August 6, 1945, a time when I was sure we would win the war by Feb. of 1946. That was based on my own assessment as a fighter pilot flying P-51 's with the 45th fighter squadron on Iwo Jima. I had to leave my damaged plane over Yokohama Bay on a Fighter sweep to Tokyo, and fortunately was picked up out of the Bay by the Japanese Navy, instead of by Civilians, and taken by motorcycle sidecar to the Prison Camp at Ofuna. This was August 6, 1945 in the morning of the same day the Air Corps was dropping the Bomb on Hiroshima. I didn't suffer unduly as a result of the bomb being dropped that day. My experience was at about 10:00 in the morning. I was released along with the other pows in the next month to Okinawa, then to the Philippines, by slow boat to San Francisco Letterman Hospital then home to Champaign, Ill. The US Army was shipping a boatload of us pow's back to the States for discharge instead of to our original squadrons so the 45th squadron only knew that I had disappeared on the 6th of August, but not whether I was alive or not, and my Squadron was not advised of my status even though I had travel orders issued to me



45th FS on Mission to Japan National Archives

I was a first Lt. in the 45th. Fighter Squadron of the 15th. Fighter Group and had much the same experiences that your Newsletter describes, except maybe mine were not as extensive. We flew into Iwo when the south half of the Island was not secured and the marines were fighting the Japs just North and East of the South Airfield. I remember getting into Iwo when it was very dusty and being briefed almost immediately for a close air bombing support for the Marines. There were large yellow markers to locate our forces for us so that we would not drop our bombs on our marines instead of on the Japs. The date of this action including leaving Saipan for Iwo was March 8th, 1945. My first long-range overwater flight to Japan from Iwo was in April of 1945.

We were living in tents alongside the runway South of where the squadron was located that suffered the Japanese Banzai attack. We were just lucky that we weren't as close to the front lines. The souvenir hunting trip described in the Newsletter was so identical that a friend of mine took with me it almost felt like living it all over again. We also had no idea we were at the front with the Marines. All I found was a Jap bayonet. There have been some "reunions" of remaining 45th. Squadron members, but I have not been able to attend more than a few. It seems like the makeup of our

squadron was mostly from the west, especially those members who were original to the squadron. I was in the Class of 44B so 28 of us joined the squadron as an experiment for transitional training directly from Advanced. I believe 5 of us survived the training and combat operations. We waited around at Hickam for the previous combat experienced pilots to return from leave. They had been in combat with the Japanese in the Solomon Islands. This meant we shipped out to Hawaii in March of '44 and actually started flying again the beginning of April 1944.

I'm going to stop this letter before it really gets long winded. I am writing to you to express my appreciation for the effort you have put into the SUNSETTER'S GAZETTE. I have gotten more out of this issue than any other Newsletters. It has seemed to me that no one knew anything about the 45th. Obviously no one is contributing any information about the 45th.

I'm also sending along a small contribution to help in a way in your efforts.

Sincerely, Gerhard Rettberg (retired) formerly 1st. Lt. 45th. Fighter Sqdr. (years and years ago)
1424 Mayfair Rd.
Champaign, Ill.
61821

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Lt. Col John L. McGinn deceased - Dad was with the 18th Pursuit Group at Wheeler Airfield, Honolulu during the Dec. 7th 1941 attack. He was with the unit for awhile before ending up with the 13th Air Force's 339th Fighter Squadron on Guadalcanal. Since his final takeoff, I like many sons and other family members have had a resurgence of patriotism. As part of this, I've been doing extensive research on my dad's military career. My dad's 18th Pursuit Group days were probably a mixed blessing in that he was spending time in the beautiful location of Hawaii, and then also having his trial by fire and blood. He never shirked it (his duty) and always went after it with determination, if not enthusiasm. He's passed the torch on to me. I would be very interested in corresponding with anyone about this earlier period of my dad's.

Thanks in advance

Shaun McGinn

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My name is Cory Graff and I am a member of the staff at the Museum of Flight in Seattle. I am currently writing a book on Iwo Jima and would appreciate it if any members reading this could provide me with an insight to the following:

"Lt. Foster" of the 318th. His P-38 was damaged over Iwo. Was this Warren Foster?

Who flew from Iwo to Japan on August 30th? The 414th, according to their papers, did.

Jack Lambert's book, the Pineapple Air Force says "all units" took part in "show of force" flight on "August 31st." Can anyone confirm this? Was it the 30th and what units took part in the flights.

Also, did anyone fly from Iwo to Japan on September 2nd? It appears not.

Thanks Cory

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The following P-51 questions come from a fellow Boeing employee who is an avid P-51 enthusiast.

#1 Some pictures of the engine compartment show two small vertical cylinders located on the right side between the engine and the firewall just forward of and at the same elevation as the tachometer generator. What are these cylinders for? I know it's not part of the supercharger.

#2 On the right side of the plane is the oil breather tube. Forward of it about 24" is something that resembles a vent with a perforated plate cover about 2" in diameter. I'm guessing it's for the vent system to the oil tank and maybe also the oil separator. True assumption?

#3 The oil separator uses air from the vacuum pump to pressurize the auxiliary fuel tanks. The separated oil is either returned to the engine or vented. The cleaned air is routed to the auxiliary fuel tanks. Just before the air is routed to the tanks it is directed through a horizontal tube with a series of bands around it. What does this tube do?

#4 I Noticed a few of the 7th planes had plates covering the flare gun hole. How come?

#5 On the P51D are 6 .50 caliber machineguns - 3 in each wing. The ammo uses disintegrating links and are ejected downward during firing. Looking at photographs of the bottom of the wings you can see that the link ejection chutes for the middle and outboard guns are located forward and inboard of the spent shell casing ejection chutes. I don't see a link ejection chute for the inboard guns. Where do the inboard gun links get ejected? Is it possible that the disintegrating links and the spent shell casings share the same chute? If so then why?

Ron Keller

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Please contact the Editor at the address listed on the back of this newsletter with any answers that you may have to the above queries. I will be happy to get you in touch with the authors.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

Membership

A question that many folks have, is, who can be a member of the 7th Fighter Command Association? The answer is quite simple... if you were at anytime during your career assigned to, or attached to, the Hawaiian Air Force or the 7th Fighter Command, you are qualified to become a member. This invitation extends to the families of veterans who served with the 7th FC as well. Currently we have 1300 members in our rank. If you know someone who should be a member and who would enjoy the newsletter, please contact the editor.

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. If I get enough articles from members, I will go to three times a year. 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
Anton, Alma	WARDS	09/18/2004
Brown, George M.	46th	03/01/2004
Ciensi, Frank	73rd	01/11/2004
Costa, Agnes Bringuel	WARDS	01/13/2003
Down, Robert R.	47th	11/06/2003
Eldridge, Hilary G.	386th ASG	09/26/2004
Fager, Victor	19th	10/24/2004
Flaherty, Raymond C.	78th	06/03/2004
Fraser, Stella	WARDS	12/09/2003
Gattuso, Frank	318th	08/19/2004
Grant, John J.	462nd	12/23/2003
Hutengs, Walter J.	462nd	10/19/2003
Janick, Edward J.	47th	02/09/2004
Knouse, Elizabeth	WARDS	09/30/2002
Lapp, Donald E.	78th	01/08/2002
Marcinkevich, Edward	386th ASG	01/24/2005
Mollica, Ralph J.	333rd	03/06/2002
Parton, Donald J.	78th	02/16/2001
Schuck, Albert J.	86th Obsr Sqdr	09/06/2003
Standish, Murray	21st FG	01/24/1963
Steele, Donald P.	19th	06/05/2004
Thompson, Theodore	386th ASG	11/23/2003
Yardley, Maili Frost	WARDS	06/28/2003

SUNSETTER'S GAZETTE

Mark Stevens – Editor

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Renton, WA 98058-9405

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Address Correction Requested

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

Newsletter of the Seventh Fighter Command - World War II

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: Frank Rodgers

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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| 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.
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