



The Straphanger Gazette



Volume 10 Vol. 4

Find us on the web at <http://www.araassociation.com>

April – June, 2018

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“Aerial Rocket Artillery”....when called on by those who were in danger, our units were there laying it on the line.

We were proud of our Aerial Rocket Artillery Team then and still proud of it now.

The Straphanger Gazette is a quarterly publication of the Aerial Rocket Artillery Association. Issues will be published on or about the 1st of January, April, July and October. Members who have e-mail will receive a copy as an pdf

WE NEED TO SPRING TO FT. SILL IN THE FALL



President's Corner

Spring is in the air. The daffodils have bloomed and the roses are budding, but I am in California. The east coast is preparing for another North-easter. It has been six months since our gathering in Williamsburg and six months till our reunion at Fort Sill. We are betwixt and between.

Our host, Clovis Jones, is visiting Fort Sill as I write this to finalize all the details of the planning for the reunion. As members of the association, it is our job to fill out our registration and make our payment as soon as possible. This is so important so accurate counts can be provided to our vendors. Clovis is trying to pull off a real coup. I don't want to spoil it, but if Clovis can pull this off it will make the reunion extra special.

The reunion is being held at Fort Sill to commemorate the 50th year anniversary of when the 4th BN 77th Artillery of the 101st Airborne Division deployed to Vietnam from Fort Sill. They arrived in Vietnam on October 17th, 1968 under the command of LTC Robert Bartholomew. The Division served in the northern I Corps area of operations against the NVA infiltration routes through Laos and the A Shau Valley. Notable combat actions of the 101st Airborne Division included Hamburger Hill in 1969, Firebase Ripcord in 1970, and supporting the ARVN Operation Lam Son 719 in southern Laos in 1971. We welcome our brother ARA members to the Fort Sill Reunion.

As a young 2nd Lieutenant, I reported to Fort Sill in February 1965. I became a Safety Officer (yellow hat) with the 2nd BN 17th Artillery. In July of 1965, my unit received orders for Vietnam, but I went to flight school instead. I feel so fortunate because now I am a proud member of the ARA and get to meet so many other wonderful members and share our stories and comradeship.

Peace and good health to all.

Dave Borgeson, ARA 6

In spite of the best efforts off the Editor to be punctual in the face of the need to leave on a medical missionary trip to The Philippines, an unexplainable glitch in the email server which we have used for many years did not deliver this publication to its anxious audience. The management trusts you have since received The Straphanger Gazette Vol. 10 No.3 and found it entertaining and informative. In the unending parade of FUBARs some important information was received too late for normal publication and had to be placed on the website. Our thanks to Jesse Hobby for his stepping in to disseminate the information but since not everyone is tuned in to the website, we are publishing this now to get out the “skinny”.

Our Chaplain and correspondent to the Saber has also shared some of the information.

Yes! We are still a team.

21st AERIAL ROCKET ARTILLERY REUNION

Fort Sill/Lawton, OK September 12 – 16, 2018

The 21st Annual ARA Reunion will be very special since it will also be the 50 Year Commemoration of deployment of the 4th Battalion, 77th Artillery (ARA), 101st Airborne to the Republic of Vietnam. The reunion will be held at Fort Sill, OK and the dates are September 12 – 16, 2018. As Artillerymen we all know that Fort Sill is located adjacent to Lawton, OK.

For additional information about Reunion 2018 contact:

Host: Clovis Jones clovisjones@me.com

Dave Borgeson dborgeson41@gmail.com

Reference ARA Reunion 2018 in subject line please

WHERE WE WILL BE STAYING

Headquarters for the Association will be:

HOMWOOD SUITES

Lawton, OK 73501

4155 East Interstate,
(580) 357-9800

This is an all suites hotel, one of the Hilton Hotel brands. They offer a guest social Monday through Thursday from 1730 – 1930 where complimentary beer and wine and a light meal is served. They will also provide a complimentary breakfast daily from 0630 – 0930. The hotel manager has blocked 40 rooms for our reunion, 30 are King Bed Suites and 10 Double Queen Bed Suites. Each suite has a kitchen.

ROOM TYPES AND CODES:

King Bed Studio - everything in one room, \$99.00 per night plus tax of 14.38% = \$113.24. **Room code is KSTN.**

King Bed Suite - separate bedroom, \$99.00 per night plus tax of 14.38% = \$113.24. Room code is **KHWN.**

Double Queen Suite - separate bedroom, \$109.00 per night plus tax of 14.38% = \$124.68. Room code is **QHWN.**

Note: Room rates are valid 2 days prior through 2 days after the Reunion.

IMPORTANT REQUIREMENT:

A VALID MILITARY ID OR VISITORS PASS WILL BE REQUIRED DURING PORTIONS OF THE EVENT - READ BELOW

As a group, we will go on to Fort Sill three (3) times during our reunion (see schedule) and we are required to travel by bus (same as Fort Benning in 2015); we will need to be cleared by the Visitor Control Center each time we enter. It is highly recommended that members and guests without a Military ID Card go to the Fort Sill Visitor Control Center during the day on Wednesday, September 12th (or date of arrival if checking in earlier/later) to obtain a Visitor Pass for the duration of their stay. It will take about ten (10) minutes to obtain your pass. We will publish a form in the next newsletter and on the website that will allow persons without Govt. ID Cards to complete and then present to the Visitors Center upon arrival. This will save time.

The Visitor Control Center is located just prior to the Sheridan Road Gate at T6701 NW Sheridan Road, Lawton, OK 73503.

IF YOU OR YOUR GUEST DO NOT HAVE A VALID MILITARY ID YOU MUST BRING A GOVERNMENT ISSUED STATE OR FEDERAL ID WITH YOUR PICTURE - SUCH AS A DRIVER'S LICENSE, STATE ID CARD OR PASSPORT - IDs CANNOT BE EXPIRED.

REUNION SCHEDULE

Wednesday, September 12, 2018

Registration and Welcome Reception

- 0630 to 0930 Complimentary Breakfast

- 1200 to 1530 Registration

- 1600 – Buses Depart for Fort Sill Visitor Control Center (VCC)

- 1610 – Arrive Visitor Control Center

- 1640 – Buses depart VCC for Fort Sill Historic Patriot Club – Old Officers Club

- 1650 – Buses arrive Historic Patriot Club

- 1700 - 1750 Cocktails

- 1800 - 2000 Buffet Dinner

- 2130 – Buses depart for Homewood Suites

Thursday, September 13, 2018 Live Fire Observation and Museum Tours:

- 0630 – 0830 Complimentary Breakfast

- 0840 – Buses depart Homewood Suites for Fort Sill Visitors Center

- 0900 – Buses arrive at Fort Sill Visitors Center

- 0930 – Bus departs for Firing Point

- 0950 – Buses arrive at Firing Point
- 1000 – 1130 Observe Live Fire Exercise
- 1140 – Buses depart Firing Point for Field Artillery Museum
- 1200 – 1300 Lunch – Dining Facility
- 1320 – 1445 Guided tour of Field Artillery Museum
- 1500 – 1600 Guided Tour of Air Defense Artillery Museum
- 1600 – Buses depart Museums for Homewood Suites
- 1630 – Buses arrive Homewood Suites
- 1730 – 1930 Hotel Social

Friday, September 14, 2018 Open Time – Activities of your choice:

- 0630 – 0930 Complimentary Breakfast
- 0930 – 1600 Registration
- All Day – Open Time - Lunch and dinner on your own

Saturday, September 15, 2018 Annual Meeting and Farewell Banquet:

- 0630 – 0930 Complimentary Breakfast
- 1000 – 1200 Annual General Meeting
- 1200- 1600 Open Time – Lunch on your own
- 1610 – Buses depart for Visitor Control Center (VCC)
- 1620 – Arrive VCC
- 1640 – Buses depart VCC for Historic Patriot Club
- 1650 – Buses arrive Historic Patriot Club
- 1700 -1750 Cocktails
- 1800 – 2000 Farewell Dinner
- 2130 – Buses depart for Homewood Suites
- 2200 – Arrive Homewood Suites

Sunday, September 16, 2018 Farewell Breakfast

- 0630 – 0930 Complimentary Breakfast and Good Byes

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

During Open Time on Friday and Saturday places of interest in the Lawton area are the:
Museum of the Great Plains_

The Holy City of The Wichitas
The Comanche National Museum & Cultural Center
The Historic Mattie Beal House_

There are a couple of Casinos - Apache Casino Hotel & Comanche Nation Casino - if you would like to gamble.

See you in OK!

For additional information about Reunion 2018 contact:
Reunion Host Clovis Jones clovisjones@me.com
Dave Borgeson dborgeson41@gmail.com. Reference ARA Reunion 2018.

COOL THREADS AND COVERS FOR THE REUNION

Jesse Hobby has been working hard on the acquisition of the new shirts and caps which we would encourage all to wear at the reunion in Ft. Sill. GOOD NEWS! He went back to the vendor who made the Caps and Shirts that were unveiled in Williamsburg and depicted in the two prior Straphangers. He was told that the prices for this year would be the same.

Pricing for cap (men's or women's) with ARA Logo will be - \$10.00 +. There are only two styles of women's caps in red.

Pricing for shirts (men's or women') with ARA Logo will be \$20.00 for shirts all sizes. Since we are ordering in quantity we are able to offer the caps and shirts at the following prices.

Our patch supply is almost exhausted. (We are down to one "GRIFFIN.") The vendor for the caps and shirts has a vendor who will make patches for us without charging "Set-Up" fee. Price is \$5.00 per patch in quantities of 100. This is based on 4" patch. If we order for all ARA Units listed we will need about 800. We will ask if they can give price break since we would be ordering a large quantity even though of different items.

We are also looking at another vendor to check on patches. We will update this search in a later issue.



Our decal supply is also depleted and we are working with a local print shop to get more. Pricing information will also have to wait for a later edition.

It appears we will have a sufficient supply of name tags and lanyards when we get the Williamsburg tags back. If we need more it will not be a problem as we have a vendor for them also.

A prototype coffee mug in the near future for presentation to the



mug will be prepared BOD approval and membership. .

The suggested shirt and cap for men as modeled by Tony Quesada.

This is the suggested ladies cap. It WILL be red with the ARA logo , a lower crown and shorter bill than the men's.



The suggested shirt for our ladies as modeled by the lovely Bentlieth

Borgeson.

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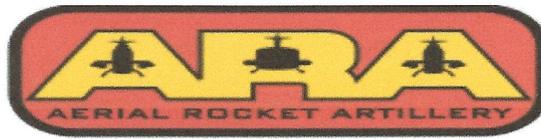
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ATTENTION ALL ARA MEN:

DO NOT DELETE THIS PUBLICATION UNTIL ALL SPOUSES, SIGNIFICANT OTHERS AND COMPANIONS HAVE READ IT. THE INFORMATION IS FOR ALL IN THE FAMILY.



21st ARA REUNION, FORT SILL SEPTEMBER 12 – 16, 2018
50 YEAR COMMERATION OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE
4th BN/77th ARTY OF THE 101st Airborne Division

Reunion Registration Form

Send form and check(s) made payable to **ARA ASSOCIATION** to:

ARA ASSOCIATION
 c/o Herbert L. Hirst
 P.O. Box 220
 North Plains, OR 97133-0220

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Information | |
| Name/Membership # | |
| Wife/Guest name(s) | |
| Additional Guest(s) | |
| Street Address | |
| City, State, Zip Code | |
| Telephone Number | Home Cell |
| Email Address | |
| Is Special Assistance Required | |

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Please list name(s) as you would like for them to appear on NAME TAG(S) | Where From |
| Member | |
| Spouse/Guest | |
| ARA Units(s) | |
| Dates | |

| REGISTRATION/EVENT FEES | Details | Price | # In party | Total |
|--|------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Registration Fee | Per member in party over 18 | \$30.00 | | |
| Annual Membership Dues | If not already paid for 2018 | \$25.00 | | |
| Wed. – Dinner at Historic Patriot Club | Per member in party | \$30.00 | | |
| Bus Transportation to and from all events at Fort Sill + \$6.00 Thurs. lunch | Per member in party | \$46.00 | | |
| Sat. – Final Banquet at Historic Patriot Club | Per member in party | \$38.00 | | |
| Total for Reunion | ----- | ----- | ----- | |

Please complete and return by August 1, 2018 so that we may finalize all plans and secure set prices for events. Registration forms will be numbered upon receipt in order to secure seats on bus. Please send confirmation of attendance e-mail to host for head counts. E-mail address for host is clovisjones@me.com Telephone (480) 650-9698

Thanks and hope to see you all at Fort Sill, Lawton, OK in September 2018.

Final Flight



Norval Glenn Brown, 70, of Haskell, Texas passed away on January 8, 2018 at Hendrick Hospice in Abilene, TX. A celebration of his life was held on Saturday, January 13, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. at the Haskell Church of Christ with Philip Sims officiating.

Glenn was born August 22, 1947 in Odessa, Texas to the late Loal and Jewel Smith Brown. On July 1, 1966, he married the love of his life, Linda Williams in Odessa, Texas. Glenn was a Retired Army Reserves Officer and a Cobra Pilot in Vietnam with C Batt. 2/20th ARA, 1st Cavalry Div. (1968-69) and headed up the placement of a Cobra aircraft at the Vietnam Memorial in Midland/Odessa, TX. He was a member and Vice President of the Aerial-Rocket-Association, NRA, the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association and was inducted into the American Airman Combat Hall of Fame. After his service, he worked in the oilfield in sales. Glenn was a member of the Church of Christ in Haskell. He was the host for the ARA Reunion in Midland, TX in 2009.

He was a good friend, authored a memoir of his Vietnam experiences "[Blue Max: Missions and Memories](#)" and was an encourager for fellow ARA'er Russ Warriner to write his memoir, "[Empty Tubes and Back Seat Memories](#)"

Glenn was preceded in death by his parents, Loal and Jewel Brown and sisters, Cathleen Martell and Patricia Norman.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Linda of Haskell; Son, Casey Brown of Haskell; grandsons, Brayson Brown and Korvin Brown, both of Midland; nephew, Mike Norman of Odessa; nieces, Aimee Williams and Ashlee Wheeler, both of Huffman; 2 great-nieces and 1 great-nephew and a host of dear friends.



Dewey M. King, USA, LTC (ret.) of North Little Rock, passed away Thursday, Jan. 18, 2018, at the age of 87. He was born at Quitman, Ark., on Aug. 17, 1930, to the late Dolph and Dovie (Spurlin) King.

He attended fixed wing flight school at Gary Air Force Base Texas and at Fort Rucker, Alabama where he received his wings. He attended the transition program into rotary wing aircraft at Camp Wolters, Texas. His first tour in Vietnam was with 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery, ARA, 1st Cav Division. He served the position of S-3 on deployment from CONUS to about three months in-country; and served as the Battery Commander of "B" battery for the remainder of the tour. His second tour, 1971, was with the 165th CAG. He was attached to the 3rd Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division with assignment as Airfield Commander of Camp Evans. Later in the tour he was moved to the Group Headquarters where he served as S-3.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife (Sally) of 54 years, and the mother of his two children; and his brother, Jimmy King. He is survived by his wife, Mary Alice of 10 years, a son (retired veteran), and his daughter. He is survived by his son, (retired veteran) James David King (Elfrieda); his daughter, Jeanne K. Erwin (James); grandchildren, Stephanie King and Max Erwin; sister, Kathryn Birchfield; niece Karen Howard; Mary Alice King and her two sons, Billy Dale Culbreath (Suzette) and Jerry Culbreath (Lori); grandchildren, Jennifer Julian (Matthew), Jeremy Culbreath (Lissa), Billy Gene Culbreath and Jarrett Culbreath; and four great-grandchildren, Cayden, Connor and Lucy Culbreath, and Juniper Julian. He was a member of Crescent Masonic Lodge and a member of Florence Chapter #15 OES and a dual member of Jewel Chapter #362 OES. He was a Past Grand Patron of the Grand Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star of Arkansas.

Burial was in Arkansas State Veterans Cemetery, North Little Rock.

John A. White, CPT USA; Flight Class 71-7; RVN: 71-72 C Batt 2/20 and F/79 AFA 3rd BN 1 CAV; died September 23, 2017.



Chaplain's Corner



Bonhoeffer



Brown

“LIFE TOGETHER” (Living in Community)

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1)

On January 9, 2018, as I sat at my desk reflecting on the death of my friend Norval Glenn (NG) Brown, a true Man of God, I thought of a class I had at the Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, PA. It was the study of Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the noted German Lutheran theologian and teacher who died on April 9, 1945, at the Flossenburg Camp, by hanging at the hands of the Nazi officials because of his opposition to the rise of fascism in Germany. From all the films of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life I had seen, I felt that he and Glenn Brown shared much in common. Their physical presence was similar; however, their service to God and Country was overwhelmingly the same and witnessed by many of those who knew them well. Both acted in accord with their fundamental view of ethics, that a Christian must accept his responsibility as a citizen of this world where God has placed him.

Bonhoeffer spent his last weeks with men and women of many nationalities: Russians, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Italians, and Germans. One of these, an English officer, wrote: *“Bonhoeffer always seemed to me to spread an atmosphere of happiness and joy over the least incident and profound gratitude for the mere fact that he was alive... He was one of the very few persons I have ever met for whom God was real and always near.”*

Our limited time with Glenn also included days when we engaged the enemy in Vietnam, plus it included our time as we walked the walk of Christian discipleship after Vietnam. As Bonhoeffer wrote in his, ***Life Together (A discussion of Christian Fellowship)***, *“Christianity could never be merely intellectual theory, doctrine divorced from life, or mystical emotion; but always it must be responsible, obedient action, the discipleship of Christ in every situation of concrete everyday life, personal and public.”* That was the Glenn Brown I knew in my walk with him on this journey. With Glenn we experienced the Fellowship of Christians. For that we thank God. Glenn, we are diminished by your absence, but we are better and stronger in our faith for having known you as our companion. We thank God for giving you to us to know and to love. May God continue to bless you and keep you in His loving arms forever.

Peace,

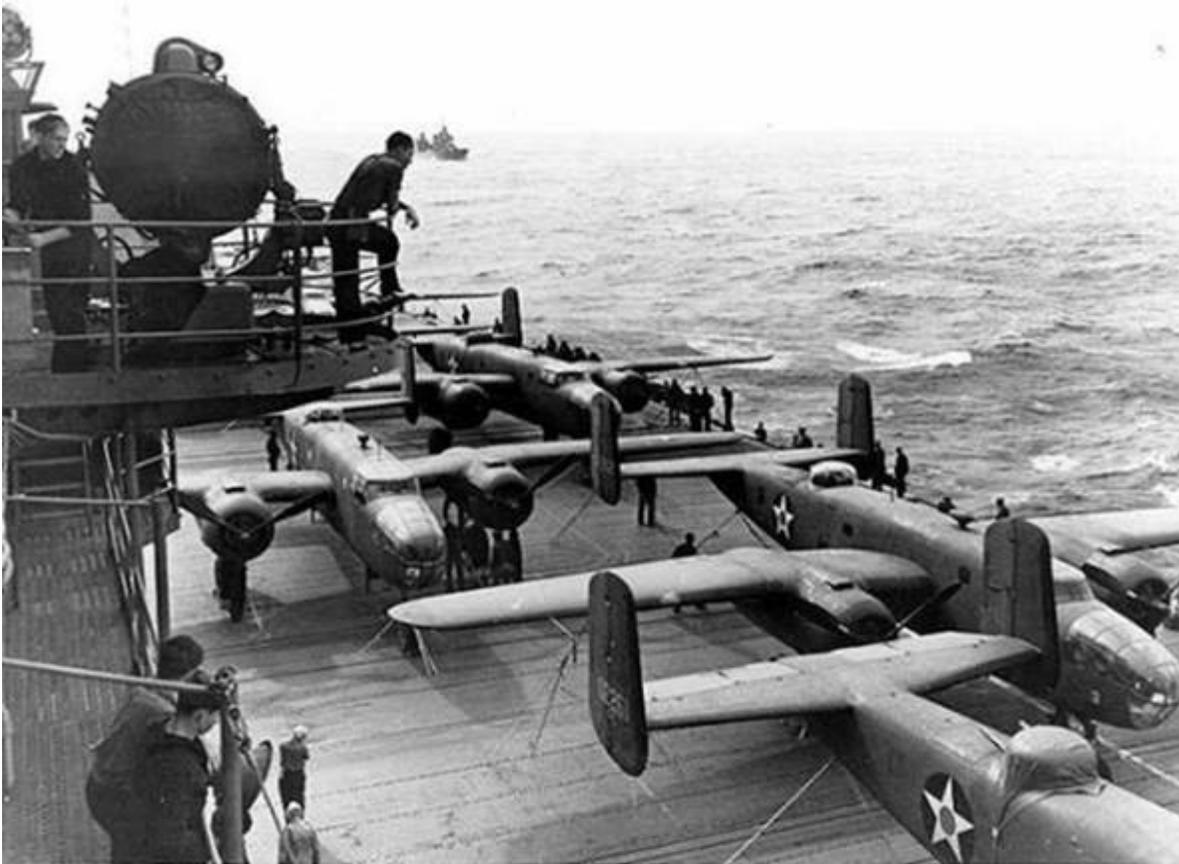
Bruce Wilder
Chaplain



Aircraft #13 on the Doolittle Raid

This is a very interesting account by one of the pilots involved in Doolittle's raid on Japan in the early days of WWII. We had true heroes in the service during that time and it's comforting to know that our current military is staffed with men and women who certainly show the same resolve when called upon to do so.

B-25Bs parked on board USS Hornet during the Doolittle Raid, April 1942



My name is Edgar McElroy. My friends call me "Mac". I was born and raised in Ennis, the youngest of five children, son of Harry and Jennie McElroy. Folks say that I was the quiet one.

We lived at 609 North Dallas Street and attended the Presbyterian Church. My dad had an auto mechanic's shop downtown close to the main fire station. My family was a hard working bunch, and I was expected to work at dad's garage after school and on Saturdays, so I grew up in an atmosphere of machinery, oil and grease. Occasionally I would hear a lone plane fly over, and would run out in the street and strain my eyes against the sun to watch it. Someday, that would be me up there! I really like cars, and I was always busy on some project, and it wasn't long before I decided to build my very own Model-T out of spare parts.

I got an engine from over here, a frame from over there, and wheels from someplace else, using only the good parts from old cars that were otherwise shot. It wasn't very pretty, but it was all mine. I enjoyed driving on the dirt roads around town and the feeling of freedom and speed. That car of mine could really go fast. 40 miles per hour!

In high school I played football and tennis, and was good enough at football to receive an athletic scholarship from Trinity University in Waxahachie. I have to admit that sometimes I daydreamed in class, and often times I thought about flying my very own airplane and being up there in the clouds. That is when I even decided to take a correspondence course in aircraft engines.

Whenever I got the chance, I would take my girl on a date up to Love Field in Dallas. We would watch the airplanes and listen to those mighty piston engines roar. I just loved it and if she didn't, well that was just too bad.

After my schooling, I operated a filling station with my brother, then drove a bus, and later had a job as a machinist in Longview, but I never lost my love of airplanes and my dream of flying. With what was going on in Europe and in Asia, I figured that our country would be drawn into war someday, so I decided to join the Army Air Corps in November of 1940. This way I could finally follow my dream.

I reported for primary training in California. The training was rigorous and frustrating at times. We trained at airfields all over California. It was tough going, and many of the guys washed out. When I finally saw that I was going to make it, I wrote to my girl back in Longview, Texas. Her name is Agnes Gill. I asked her to come out to California for my graduation and oh yeah, also to marry me.

I graduated on July 11, 1941. I was now a real, honest-to-goodness Army Air Corps pilot. Two days later, I married "Aggie" in Reno, Nevada. We were starting a new life together and were very happy. I received my orders to report to Pendleton, Oregon and join the 17th Bomb Group. Neither of us had travelled much before, and the drive north through the Cascade Range of the Sierra Nevada's was interesting and beautiful. It was an exciting time for us.

My unit was the first to receive the new B-25 medium bomber. We were transferred to another airfield in Washington State, where we spent a lot a time flying practice missions and attacking imaginary targets. Then, there were other assignments in Mississippi and Georgia, for more maneuvers and more practice.

We were on our way back to California on December 7th when we got word of a Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. We listened with mixed emotions to the announcements on the radio, and the next day to the declaration of war. What the President said, it just rang over and over in my head, "*With confidence in our armed forces, with the un-bounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph. So help us God.*" By gosh, I felt as though he was talking straight to me! I didn't know what would happen to us, but we all knew that we would be going somewhere now.

We flew patrols over the coasts of Oregon and Washington from dawn until dusk. In early February, we were ordered to report to Columbus, South Carolina. Man, this Air Corps sure moves a fellow around a lot! Little did I know what was coming next!\

After we got settled in Columbus, my squadron commander called us all together. He told us that an awfully hazardous mission was being planned, and then he asked for volunteers. There were some of the guys that did not step forward, but I was one of the ones that did.

We that volunteered were transferred to Eglin Field near Valparaiso, Florida in late February. When we all got together, there were about 140 of us volunteers, and we were told that we were now part of the "Special B-25 Project." We set about our training, but none of us knew what it was all about. We were ordered not to talk about it, not even to our wives.

In early March, we were all called in for a briefing, and gathered together in a big building there on the base. Somebody said that the fellow who's head of this thing is coming to talk to us, and in walks Lieutenant Colonel Jimmy Doolittle. He was already an aviation legend, and there he stood right in front of us. I was truly amazed just to meet him.

Colonel Doolittle explained that this mission would be extremely dangerous, and that only volunteers could take part. He said that he could not tell us where we were going, but he could say that some of us would not be coming back. There was a silent pause; you could have heard a pin drop. Then Doolittle said that anyone of us could withdraw now, and that no one would criticize us for this decision.

No one backed out! From the outset, all volunteers worked from the early morning hours until well after sunset. All excess weight was stripped from the planes and extra gas tanks were added. The lower gun turret was removed, the heavy liaison radio was removed, and then the tail guns were taken out and more gas tanks were put aboard. We extended the range of that plane from 1000 miles out to 2500 miles.

After an intensive training period, my crew and I received orders to fly to McClellan Air Base in Sacramento, California at the lowest possible level. So here we went on our way west, scraping the tree tops at 160 miles per hour, and skimming along just 50 feet above plowed fields. We crossed North Texas and then the panhandle, scaring the dickens out of livestock, buzzing farm houses and a many a barn along the way. Over the Rocky Mountains and across the Mojave Desert dodging thunderstorms, we enjoyed the flight immensely and although tempted, I didn't do too much dare-devil stuff.

We didn't know it at the time, but it was good practice for what lay ahead of us. It proved to be our last fling. Once we arrived in Sacramento, the mechanics went over our plane with a fine-toothed comb. Of the twenty-two planes that made it, only those whose pilots reported no mechanical problems were allowed to go on. The others were shunted aside.

After having our plane serviced, we flew on to Alameda Naval Air Station in Oakland. As I came in for final approach, we saw it! I excitedly called the rest of the crew to take a look. There below us was a huge aircraft carrier. It was the USS Hornet, and it looked so gigantic! Man, I had never even seen a carrier until this moment. There were already two B-25s parked on the flight deck. Now we knew! My heart was racing, and I thought about how puny my plane would look on board this mighty ship.

There were sixteen B-25s tied down on the flight deck, and I was flying number 13. All the carrier's fighter planes were stored away helplessly in the hangar deck. They couldn't move until we were gone. Our Army mechanics were all on board, as well as our

munitions loaders and several back up crews, in case any of us got sick or backed out. We settled into a daily routine of checking our planes. The aircraft were grouped so closely together on deck that it wouldn't take much for them to get damaged. Knowing that my life depended on this plane, I kept a close eye on her.

Day after day, we met with the intelligence officer and studied our mission plan. Our targets were assigned, and maps and objective folders were furnished for study. We went over approach routes and our escape route towards China. I never studied this hard back at Trinity. Every day at dawn and at dusk the ship was called to general quarters and we practiced finding the quickest way to our planes. If at any point along the way, we were discovered by the enemy fleet, we were to launch our bombers immediately so the Hornet could bring up its fighter planes. We would then be on our own, and try to make it to the nearest land, either Hawaii or Mid-way Island.

On Sunday, April 14, we met up with Admiral Bull Halsey's task force just out of Hawaii and joined into one big force. The carrier Enterprise was now with us, another two heavy cruisers, four more destroyers and another oiler. We were designated as Task Force 16. It was quite an impressive sight to see, and represented the bulk of what was left of the U.S. Navy after the devastation of Pearl Harbor. There were over 10,000 Navy personnel sailing into harm's way, just to deliver us sixteen Army planes to the Japs, orders of the President.

Colonel Doolittle called us together on the flight deck. We all gathered round, as well as many Navy personnel. He pulled out some medals and told us how these friendship medals from the Japanese government had been given to some of our Navy officers several years back. And now the Secretary of the Navy had requested for us to return them. Doolittle wired them to a bomb while we all posed for pictures. Something to cheer up the folks back home!

Colonel Doolittle let each crew pick our own target. We chose the Yokosuka Naval Base about twenty miles from Tokyo. We loaded 1450 rounds of ammo and four 500-pound bombs. A little payback, direct from Ellis County, Texas! We checked and re-checked our plane several times. Everything was now ready. I felt relaxed, yet tensed up at the same time. Day after tomorrow, we will launch when we are 400 miles out. I lay in my cot that night, and rehearsed the mission over and over in my head. It was hard to sleep as I listened to sounds of the ship.

Early the next morning, I was enjoying a leisurely breakfast, expecting another full day on board, and I noticed that the ship was pitching and rolling quite a bit this morning, more than normal. I was reading through the April 18th day plan of the Hornet, and there was a message in it which said, "*From the Hornet to the Army - Good luck, good hunting, and God bless you.*" I still had a large lump in my throat from reading this, when all of a sudden, the intercom blared, "*General Quarters, General Quarters, All hands man your battle stations! Army pilots, man your planes!!!*"

There was instant reaction from everyone in the room and food trays went crashing to the floor. I ran down to my room jumping through the hatches along the way, grabbed my bag, and ran as fast as I could go to the flight deck. I met with my crew at the plane, my heart was pounding. Someone said, "*What's going on?*" The word was that the Enterprise had spotted an enemy trawler. It had been sunk, but it had transmitted radio messages. We had been found out!

The weather was crummy, the seas were running heavy, and the ship was pitching up and down like I had never seen before. Great waves were crashing against the bow and washing over the front of the deck. This wasn't going to be easy! Last minute instructions were given. We were reminded to avoid non-military targets, especially the Emperor's Palace. Do not fly to Russia, but fly as far west as possible, land on the water and launch our rubber raft. This was going to be a one-way trip! We were still much too far out and we all knew that our chances of making land were somewhere between slim and none. Then at the last minute, each plane loaded an extra ten 5-gallon gas cans to give us a fighting chance of reaching China.

The ship headed into the wind and picked up speed. There was now a near gale force wind and water spray coming straight over the deck. I looked down at my instruments as my engines revved up. My mind was racing. I went over my mental checklist, and said a prayer? God please, help us! Past the twelve planes in front of us, I strained to see the flight deck officer as he leaned into the wind and signalled with his arms for Colonel Doolittle to come to full power.

One by one, the planes in front of us took off. The deck pitched wildly, 60 feet or more, it looked like. One plane seemed to drop down into the drink and disappeared for a moment, then pulled back up into sight. There was sense of relief with each one that made it.

"*Here We Go!*" I released the brakes and we started rolling forward, and as I looked down the flight-deck you could see straight down into the angry churning water. As we slowly gained speed, the deck gradually began to pitch back up. I pulled up and our plane slowly strained up and away from the ship. There was a big cheer and whoops from the crew, but I just felt relieved and muttered to myself, "*Boy, that was short!*"

We made a wide circle above our fleet to check our compass headings and get our bearings. I looked down as we passed low over one of our cruisers and could see the men on deck waving to us. Now we settled in for the five hour flight. Tokyo, here we come!

We spotted Tokyo Bay, turned west and put our nose down diving toward the water. Once over the bay, I could see our target, Yokosuka Naval Base. Off to the right there was already smoke visible over Tokyo. Coming in low over the water, I increased speed to 200 mph and told everyone, "*Get Ready!*"

When we were close enough, I pulled up to 1300 feet and opened the bomb doors. There were furious black bursts of anti-aircraft fire all around us, but I flew straight on through them, spotting our target, the torpedo works and the dry-docks. I saw a big ship in the dry-dock just as we flew over it. Those flak bursts were really getting close and bouncing us around, when I heard "*Bombs Away!*"

I couldn't see it, but heard one of the crew shout jubilantly, "*We got an aircraft carrier! The whole dock is burning!*"

I started turning to the south and strained my neck to look back and at that moment saw a large crane blow up and start falling over! Take that! There was loud yelling and clapping each other on the back. We were all just ecstatic, and still alive! But there wasn't much time to celebrate. We had to get out of here and fast!

When we were some thirty miles out to sea, we took one last look back at our target, and could still see huge billows of black smoke. Up until now, we had been flying for Uncle Sam, but now we were flying for ourselves.

We flew south over open ocean, parallel to the Japanese coast all afternoon. We saw a large submarine apparently at rest, and then in another fifteen miles, we spotted three large enemy cruisers headed for Japan. There were no more bombs, so we just let them be and kept on going.

Up until now we had not had time to think much about our gasoline supply, but the math did not look good. We just didn't have enough fuel to make it. Just when it really looked hopeless of reaching land, we suddenly picked up a strong tailwind. It was an answer to a prayer. Maybe just maybe, we can make it!

In total darkness at 2100 hours, we figured that we must be crossing the coastline, so I began a slow, slow climb to be sure of not hitting any high ground or anything. I conserved as much fuel as I could, getting real low on gas now. The guys were still cranking on the radio, but after five hours of hand cranking with aching hands and backs, there was utter silence. No radio beacon!

Then the red light started blinking, indicating twenty minutes of fuel left. We started getting ready to bail out. I turned the controls over to the co-pilot and crawled to the back of the plane, past the now collapsed rubber gas tank. I dumped everything out of my bag and repacked just what I really needed, my .45 pistol, ammunition, flashlight, compass, medical kit, fishing tackle, chocolate bars, peanut butter and crackers.

At 2230 we were up to sixty-five hundred feet. We were over land but still above the Japanese Army in China. We couldn't see the stars and couldn't get a good fix on our position. We were flying on fumes now and I didn't want to run out of gas before we were ready to go. Each man filled his canteen, put on his Mae West life jacket and parachute, and filled his bag with rations, those "C" rations from the Presidio. I put her on auto-pilot and we all gathered in the navigator's compartment around the hatch in the floor. We checked each other's parachute harness. Everyone was scared, without a doubt. None of us had ever done this before!

We kicked open the hatch and gathered around the hole looking down into the blackness. It did not look very inviting! Then I looked up at the crew and gave the order, "*JUMP!!!*"

Within seconds they were all gone. I turned and reached back for the auto-pilot, but could not reach it, so I pulled the throttles back, then turned and jumped. Counting quickly, thousand one, thousand two, thousand three, I pulled my rip-cord and jerked back up with a terrific shock. At first I thought that I was hung on the plane, but after a few agonizing seconds that seemed like hours, realized that I was free and drifting down. Being in the total dark, I was disoriented at first but figured my feet must be pointed toward the ground. I looked down through the black mist to see what was coming up. I was in a thick mist or fog, and the silence was so eerie after nearly thirteen hours inside that noisy plane. I could only hear the whoosh, whoosh sound of the wind blowing through my shroud lines, and then I heard a loud crash and explosion. My plane!

Looking for my flashlight, I groped through my bag with my right hand, finally pulled it out and shined it down toward the ground, which I still could not see. Finally I picked up a glimmer of water and thought I was landing in a lake. We're too far inland for this to be ocean. I hope! I relaxed my legs a little, thinking I was about to splash into water and would have to swim out, and then bang. I jolted suddenly and crashed over onto my side. Lying there in just a few inches of water, I raised my head and put my hands down into thick mud. It was rice paddy! There was a burning pain, as if someone had stuck a knife in my stomach. I must have torn a muscle or broke something.

I laid there dazed for a few minutes, and after a while struggled up to my feet. I dug a hole and buried my parachute in the mud. Then started trying to walk, holding my stomach, but every direction I moved the water got deeper. Then, I saw some lights off in

the distance. I fished around for my flashlight and signalled one time. Sensing something wrong, I got out my compass and to my horror saw that those lights were off to my west. That must be a Jap patrol! How dumb could I be! The rest of the crew had to be back to my east, so I sat still and quiet and did not move.

It was a cold dark lonely night. At 0100 hours I saw a single light off to the east. I flashed my light in that direction, one time. It had to be my co-pilot! I waited a while, and then called out softly, "Knobby?" And a voice replied "Mac, is that you?"

Thank goodness, what a relief! Separated by a wide stream, we sat on opposite banks of the water communicating in low voices. After daybreak Knobby found a small rowboat and came across to get me. We started walking east toward the rest of the crew and away from that Japanese patrol. Knobby had cut his hip when he went through the hatch, but it wasn't too awful bad.

We walked together toward a small village and several Chinese came out to meet us, they seemed friendly enough. I said, "*Luchu hoo megwa fugi! Luchu hoo megwa fugi!*" meaning, "*I am an American! I am an American!*"

Later that morning we found the others. Williams had wrenched his knee when he landed in a tree, but he was limping along just fine. There were hugs all around. I have never been so happy to see four guys in all my life!

Well, the five of us eventually made it out of China with the help of the local Chinese people and the Catholic missions along the way. They were all very good to us, and later they were made to pay terribly for it, so we found out afterwards. For a couple of weeks we travelled across country. Strafing a couple of times by enemy planes, we kept on moving, by foot, by pony, by car, by train, and by airplane. But we finally made it to India.

I did not make it home for the baby's birth. I stayed on there flying a DC-3 "Gooney Bird" in the China-Burma-India Theatre for the next several months. I flew supplies over the Himalaya Mountains, or as we called it, over "The Hump" into China. When B-25s finally arrived in India, I flew combat missions over Burma, and then later in the war, flew a B-29 out of the Marianna Islands to bomb Japan again and again.

After the war, I remained in the Air Force until 1962, when I retired from the service as a Lt. Colonel, and then came back to Texas, my beautiful Texas. First moving to Abilene and then we settled in Lubbock, where Aggie taught school at MacKenzie Junior High. I worked at the S & R Auto Supply, once again in an atmosphere of machinery, oil and grease.

I lived a good life and raised two wonderful sons that I am very proud of. I feel blessed in many ways. We have a great country, better than most folks know. It is worth fighting for. Some people call me a hero, but I have never thought of myself that way, no. But I did serve in the company of heroes. What we did, will never leave me. It will always be there in my fondest memories. I will always think of the fine and brave men that I was privileged to serve with.

Remember us, for we were soldiers once and young. With the loss of all 16 aircraft, Doolittle believed that the raid had been a failure, and that he would be court-martialed upon returning to the states. Quite to the contrary, the raid proved to be a tremendous boost to American morale, which had plunged following the Pearl Harbor attack. It also caused serious doubts in the minds of Japanese war planners. They in turn recalled many seasoned fighter plane units back to defend the home islands, which resulted in Japan's weakened air capabilities at the upcoming Battle of Midway and other South Pacific campaigns.

Edgar "Mac" Mc Elroy, Lt. Col., U.S.A.F. (Ret.) passed away at his residence in Lubbock, Texas early on the morning of Friday, April 4, 2003.



Ladies of the Association

Happy(almost) Spring Ladies!!

For those who are still snowbound--- I'm sorry but there is hope ! For those who have a glimpse of spring Hurrah!!

Congratulations to Marilyn and Rodger Mcallister on their 50th wedding anniversary in 2018 ! What a wonderful milestone for both of you! And Marilyn has a new "job" as Secretary of the auxiliary for MOAA (Military Officers Association of America) even though Rodger has stepped down as President !! Thank you Marilyn for your news.

This week our family is off to enjoy the great white stuff that many of you are tired of—for a week of skiing in Park City. For sure this is our last year as just getting the boots on seems to be a chore anymore.

Dave's brother passed away rather unexpectedly last week so Dave was back and forth to St .George Utah a few times. It's never easy to lose a family member but Dave seems to be doing well.

No other news . Wishing you all a HEALTHY AND HAPPY spring .

Cheers

Pat

Editor's Note: Asa and Jean Talbot will celebrate 60 years of wedded bliss in April with a cruise through the Panama Canal.

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A young woman brought her fiancé home to meet her parents. After dinner, her mother told the girl's father to find out about the young man.

The father invited the fiancé to his study for a talk.

"So, *what are your plans?*" the father asked the young man.

"I am a biblical scholar," he replied.

"A biblical scholar, hmmm?" the father said. "Admirable, but what will you do to provide a nice house for my daughter to live in?"

"I will study," the young man replied, "and God will provide for us."

"And how will you buy her a beautiful engagement ring, such as she deserves?" asked the father.

"I will concentrate on my studies," the young man replied, "God will provide for us."

"And children?" asked the father. "How will you support children?"

"Don't worry, sir, God will provide," replied the fiancé.

The conversation proceeded like this...and each time the father questioned, the young idealist insisted that God would provide.

Later, the mother asked, "How did your talk go, honey?"

The father answered, "*He has no job, he has no plans, and he thinks I'm God.*"

Let's Say I Break into Your House....

We may presume this was not written by Elizabeth Warren, but it did come from one of my more liberal friends

There may be hope for America

It explains things better than all the baloney you hear on TV.

Recently large demonstrations have taken place across the country protesting the fact that Congress is finally addressing the issue of illegal immigration.

Certain people are angry that the US might protect its own borders, might make it harder to sneak into this country and, once here, to stay indefinitely.

Let me see if I correctly understand the thinking behind these protests.

Let's say I break into your house. Let's say that when you discover me in your house, you insist that I leave. But I say, 'No! I like it here. It's better than my house. I've made all the beds and washed the dishes and did the laundry and swept the floors. I've done all the things you don't like to do. I'm hard-working and honest (except for when I broke into your house).

According to the protesters:

You are Required to let me stay in your house

You are Required to feed me

You are Required to add me to your family's insurance plan

You are Required to Educate my kids

You are Required to Provide other benefits to me & to my family

My husband will do all of your yard work because he is also hard-working and honest. (except for that breaking in part).

If you try to call the police or force me out, I will call my friends who will picket your house carrying signs that proclaim my RIGHT to be there.

It's only fair, after all, because you have a nicer house than I do, and I'm just trying to better myself. I'm a hard-working and honest, person, except for well, you know, I did break into your house

And what a deal it is for me!!!

I live in your house, contributing only a fraction of the cost of my keep, and there is nothing you can do about it without being accused of cold, uncaring, selfish, prejudiced, and bigoted behavior. Oh yeah, and I DEMAND that you learn MY LANGUAGE!!! so that you can communicate with me.

Why can't people see how ridiculous this is?!

IF I LEARNED NOTHING ELSE IN VIETNAM I DID LEARN THAT WHEN THE OTHER GUY SAYS HE IS GOING TO KILL YOU—YOU BETTER BELIEVE HIM AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION.

I don't know much about birds but I can easily identify the husband in this picture



You know you're gettin' OLD when you can't walk past a bathroom without thinking, "I may as well pee while I'm here."





AERIAL ROCKET ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION

Membership Application/Renewal Form

This form may be used for Applying for New Membership or for Renewing Existing Membership. Please circle that which is appropriate.

Name _____ Wife's Name _____

Rank _____ Membership Number _____

(At time of service in ARA)

(If known)

Retired Rank (if applicable) _____ Service Number _____

List all ARA Units that you served in. _____

| <u>Battery/Battalion</u> | <u>Dates of Service</u> | <u>Call Sign</u> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| _____ | From mo/yr to mo/yr | _____ |
| _____ | From mo/yr to mo/yr | _____ |

Current Address: _____

Street or PO Box

_____ City State Zip Code

Phone: _____

Home

Work (if okay)

Cell

E-Mail Address: _____

Association membership is on an annual basis (unless member opts for life membership) running from January 1 to December 31 and is past due on January 31.

Annual dues are **\$25.00** regardless of when submitting.

Life membership (if paid in full) is **\$250.00**. Life membership may also be paid in **\$50.00** installments on a quarterly basis until paid in full.

Total amount enclosed _____ (Please indicate in remarks section of check whether this is Initial Membership, Membership Renewal, Life Membership in full, Life Membership payment #.

Mail completed application to: Aerial Rocket Artillery Association

For Office Use Only

C/O Herbert L. Hirst

Check # _____

P.O. Box 220

Check Date _____

North Plains, OR 97133-0220

Amount _____

Web address – www.araassociation.com

Date Rcvd _____