



PASS IN REVIEW

“Shedding Light On Idaho’s Military History”

3rd Quarter

September 2011

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND ELECTIONS

The Board has scheduled the **Annual Membership Meeting for 26 October at 6:30 pm.**

The first item of business is a **BBQ with ribs and fixins. Please RSVP by 20 October** so we know of many of you will be able to attend. Following the BBQ, elections will be held for three members of the Board of Directors to serve a three-year term.

Three members of the Board will be seeking re-election. They are **Rick Johnson, Charles Ake** and **Jeff Packer**. In addition, the nomination process will be open and nominations will be accepted at the meeting.

Along with the annual election, you will also be brought up to date on the various plans and activities the Society/Museum are involved in and how you can get involved. We will also be welcoming several new members.

| October 2011 | | | | | | |
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If you haven't visited the Museum within the past month or

so, you really haven't seen the Museum. Please mark your calendar and join us on **26 October at 6:30 pm.** See you then! ☆

MiG-21 ARRIVES

Fifty-five donors chipped in to help the Idaho Military History Museum purchase an ex-Polish Air Force MiG-21. It was purchased from Ontario's Merle Maine, transported by truck during darkness (yes, ITD-legal!), and delivered to the Museum on June 22nd.

This aircraft is the fourth for the Museum. A PT-23 displayed indoors, an ex-ANG RF-4C "Phantom" and the MiG-21 "Fishbed" displayed outdoors will soon be joined by a MiG-15 2-seat trainer.

Plans are to acquire a fifth aircraft, a historic ex-Idaho ANG interceptor aircraft. These aircraft add to the growing items of military equipment, uniforms, and other memorabilia exhibited at the Idaho Military History Museum.

There can be little doubt that this aircraft will become a 'Must See' exhibit; it will serve as a vivid reminder of the Cold War. All Americans who served their country during that time which led to the successful conclusion of that confrontation with the Soviet Union deserve a "job well done."

A very special thank you to Dave Patchett who donated the truck and driver to get the plane here, Joe Terteling who donated and operated the crane and Bill Pope who made



The MiG-21 in Ontario, Oregon



The move to Idaho begins



Wheels up!

numerous substantial contributions to the effort. (Continued ⇨)

Inside This Issue -highlights include:

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT | RECENT DONATIONS |
| 116TH CAVALRY BRIGADE RETURNS | MORE IDAHO TROOPS DEPLOYING |
| NEW MEMBERS | ENDOWMENT UPDATE |
| IDAHO FILE INTO HISTORY – WILLIAM H. DRUMM | |
| MOST WANTED | JUST IN CASE |



On the way



The MiG-21 where she now stands at the Idaho Military History Museum

We would also like to say a **very special thank you** to the following individuals. Their donations made this all possible:

- LtCol Melvin Adamson**
- Mr. John Bechtel
- Brig Gen Gary Brewington**
- Mr. John Chambers
- Mr. Patrick R. Davidson
- Mr. Gary Donnelly**
- Mr. James B. Frazier
- Brig Gen William A. Free**
- Mr. Walton C. Glass**
- Mr. Bill Goodwin
- Mr. Darwin Harms
- Col Dale J. Hendry
- Mr. James O. Hunt
- Brig Gen Richard W. Johnson
- Col Larry R. Kauffman
- Mr. Rex LaBrie
- LTCol Glen L. McQuin
- Col William C. Miller**
- Mr. Ron Nordling
- Mr. Rich Ostrogorsky
- Mr. Bill Pope
- Mr. Dave Patchett
- Mr. Chester L. Pipkin
- LtCol Charlene Ripke
- Mr. Harry Sauerwein
- Mr. J.L. Scott
- LtCol Tom R. Stuart
- Brig Gen Ralph D. Townsend**
- Mr. Bruce Whittig

- Mr. Craig R. Baird
- LtCol Lee Bernasconi
- Brig Gen John T. Byrd
- LtCol Gary Daniel
- Mr. James E. Davies
- Mr. Jack Enterkine
- Mr. Frank Fullmer
- Col David Gardner
- CMSgt Clyde Glick**
- LtCol Gary Hall
- Mr. Ken Helmig
- Mr. Brian E. Henman
- Ms Gene Nora Jessen
- Mr. Alvie Johnson
- Mr. Kenneth Keim
- Mr. Larry Leach
- Mr. J.D. Merris
- LtCol John Newland
- Mr. Raymond Oelrich
- Mr. Don Pape
- Mr. Bruce Parker
- Brig Gen Ed Parsons, Jr.
- LtCol Gordon Ravenscroft
- LtCol Gregory J. Sali
- Brig Gen Gary L. Sayler**
- Capt Cleve G. Spring
- Mr. Joe Terteling
- LtCol John Walker
- Mr. Fred Wilson

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS REPORT

The Museum is working with the Boise State History Department and has four interns this semester. They are involved in research, exhibit design, cataloging artifacts and docenting.

On September 9th, the Museum hosted 85 women veterans of the US Air Force. They toured the Museum for about almost two hours and had very nice comments about the Museum.

On Saturday, October 22nd, the **Museum will be hosting a traveling exhibit from the National WWI Museum in Kansas City.** The name of the travelling exhibit is "Honoring Our History."



The exhibit is being sponsored by Waddell and Reed Inc. The exhibit is contained in a trailer that is 60 feet long and will be expanded to an area of 35 feet by 85 feet when set up.



This exhibit is free to the public and the hours on 22 October will be from 8 AM until 2 PM.

I hope all of you can make it to the Museum that day. This is a rare treat and opportunity; you won't want to miss it. More information about the traveling exhibit can be found online at www.honoringourhistory.com. - Ken Swanson ☆

RECENT DONATIONS

We have had quite a few donations this quarter. From Robert Swisher, Pasco, WA, and Luada Swisher, Sagle, ID, a nice collection of material from their father, George W. Swisher. He was in the Idaho Guard when they were federalized in 1941. He served with the 148th F.A. in the Pacific Theater.

Mrs. Sharon Gillen, Nampa, ID, donated items that her husband, Walter J. Gillen, picked up in the Pacific during WWII. Items include Japanese items and US field gear.

Fredrick Miller, Boise, ID, donated a very nice collection of military shoulder patches.

**116TH CAVALRY
BRIGADE
RETURNS**

After nine months in Iraq, the first group of Idaho soldiers of the 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team arrived back at Gowen Field, Sunday, 4 September 2011.



On or about 28 August, roughly 300 soldiers from Idaho, Montana and Oregon flew in chartered aircraft from Kuwait to Joint Base Lewis-McChord, near Tacoma, Washington.

Each soldier is expected to go through out-processing at the base for about 10 days before being released from active duty and returning to their homes. The soldiers will undergo health assessments and counseling, legal counseling, and a review of their personnel and medical records.

Deployed Army National Guardsmen of the 116th include citizen soldiers from Idaho, Montana and Oregon, with about 1,500 from Idaho, 600 from Montana and 600 from Oregon.

“I am immensely proud of the great work the men and women of the Idaho Army National Guard’s 116th Cavalry Brigade have done in Iraq,” said Gov. Butch Otter, commander in chief of the Idaho National Guard. “I have been following their progress since before they deployed last year and was proud to shake each of their hands as they left. Lori and I look forward to personally expressing the gratitude of our entire state for a job well done when they return.” – courtesy of KTVB.COM

Welcome home and well done!! ☆

**MORE IDAHO
TROOPS
DEPLOYING**

As the Idaho Army National Guard works to bring home soldiers of the 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team, a group of about 60 Treasure Valley and Idaho soldiers are preparing to deploy to Afghanistan for a year.

The Army National Guard’s Company A, 1-168 General Services Aviation Battalion, will leave in April for two months of training in Ft. Hood, Texas, and then leave for Afghanistan in June.

Using its UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, Company A, 1-168 General Services Aviation Battalion is regularly called upon to assist Idaho first responders in search and rescue efforts.



This year, crews assigned to the unit assisted in the rescue of two individuals with its hoist equipment, a snowmobiler on Bennett Mountain in Elmore County on Mar. 22 and most recently on Sep. 2, a kayaker who was hoisted to safety from the banks of the North Fork of the Boise River.

“The Idaho Army National Guard’s upcoming deployment of eight Black Hawk helicopters and 60 of our men and women is another example of our citizen soldiers responding when called upon, in the finest tradition of our motto, ‘Always Ready, Always There,’” said Brig. Gen. Alan Gayhart in a press release. “I know our aircrews and maintenance personnel will represent our state and nation well in Afghanistan.”

This unit previously deployed to Southwest Asia in 2000-2001, and to Kuwait and Iraq in 2007-2008.

- Courtesy of *Idaho Statesman* ☆

NEW MEMBERS

In recognition and appreciation for their substantial contributions both financially and through various means of ‘above and beyond’ support towards the purchase and transport of the MiG-21, the Board of Directors recognizes the following individuals and welcomes them to the IMHS with a membership in the Society:

Mr. Craig R. Baird
 Mr. John Bechtel
 LtCol Lee Bernasconi
 Brig Gen John T. Byrd
 Mr. John Chambers
 LtCol Gary Daniel
 Mr. Patrick R. Davidson
 Mr. James E. Davies
 Mr. Jack Enterkine
 Mr. Frank Fullmer
 Col David Gardner
 Mr. Bill Goodwin
 LtCol Gary Hall
 Mr. Darwin Harms
 Mr. Ken Helmig
 Col Dale J. Hendry
 Mr. Brian E. Henman
 Mr. James O. Hunt
 Ms Gene Nora Jessen
 Brig Gen Richard W. Johnson
 Mr. Alvie Johnson
 Col Larry R. Kauffman
 Mr. Kenneth Keim
 Mr. Rex LaBrie
 Mr. Larry Leach
 Mr. J.D. Merris
 LtCol John Newland
 Mr. Ron Nordling
 Mr. Rich Ostrogorsky
 Mr. Don Pape
 Mr. Bruce Parker
 Brig Gen Ed Parsons, Jr.
 Mr. Chester L. Pipkin
 LtCol Gordon Ravenscroft
 LtCol Charlene Ripke
 LtCol Gregory J. Sali
 Mr. Harry Sauerwein
 Mr. J.L. Scott
 Capt Cleve G. Spring
 LtCol Tom R. Stuart
 LtCol John Walker
 Mr. Fred Wilson

On behalf of all of us at the IMHS, thank you and welcome aboard!

☆☆☆☆

**ENDOWMENT
UPDATE**

Our Endowment balance currently stands at \$56,446.85.

Recent Endowment Donors include:

- ★MG James Brooks
- ★ Frank and Genevieve Boguslawski
(In memory of Ed Naumann)

Our Vision: To provide endowment and capital funds to create a financial base which will ensure the preservation of Idaho's military heritage for future generations.

Our Goal: An endowment of \$500,000.

This endowment will allow us to operate the Museum with one full-time staff member and provide adequate funds for development and enhancement of our exhibits, Reference Library, and Educational Outreach programs.

On May 25, 1999, the IRS granted the IMHS permanent 501(c)(3), Non-Profit, tax-exempt status. This means that **donations to the endowment are tax deductible.** Donations can be made to the endowment in memorial to an individual, as part of your estate planning, as part of your charitable contributions for tax purposes, to offer a few suggestions.

If you would like a form, there is one on the back on this newsletter and on our website at <http://museum.mil.idaho.gov>. If you desire to remain anonymous, we will honor your request.

Additionally, don't forget to use this site when shopping on line:



The Society receives a commission each time you do. *Thank you for supporting the Idaho Military Historical Society!* ★

**IDAHO FILE
INTO HISTORY**

**William H. Drumm
B-24 Pilot
Trained at Gowen Field**

I was born in Chicago, Illinois, 3 April 1924 to William H. and Mary Drumm Sr. I have one brother Robert H. Drumm and a sister Marilyn Woolweaver (deceased).

I attended St. Margaret's Grammar School and then St. Leo's High School on the South side of Chicago for one year prior to moving to Fish Lake Indiana in 1939. The reason for the move was the loss of our home in Chicago as a result of the depression. My father acquired a piece of land and a number of cedar logs (telephone poles) and built a cabin at the lake.

The cabin had very basic facilities, i.e. hand pump in the kitchen for water, kerosene was used for lighting, heating, and cooking and there was also an out-door privy. In Indiana I attended Mill Creek (Lincoln Township) High School. There were 200 students in the school, including grammar school and high school. I played basketball, worked as a hired hand on a farm during my senior year and graduated in the spring of 1942. There were 13 students in my graduating class.

In the fall of 1942, I entered St. Benedict's Men's College, Atchison Kansas, on a partial basketball

scholarship intending to major in history. It was there I met Mary Lou Maloney at a freshman mixer dance. She was attending Mount St. Scholastica College, a woman's college across town. At that time, WWII was in full swing and chances of staying in school were practically nil. It was either wait for your number to be called and take a chance on the military service and the job you would be assigned, or enlist in the service of your choice and do what you would like to do in the Service.

In November of 1942, Recruiters from all branches of the Services came to the college and I signed up with the US Army Air Forces Aviation Cadet Program and was sworn into the Army Reserve Corps on the 1st of December at the Armory in St Joseph Missouri. In January 1943, while in school, I received my "Dear John" letter to report to Jefferson Barracks, near St. Louis Missouri, on 26 February 1943 for Basic Military Training.

Approximately six weeks were spent at JB learning basic military protocol; marching, discipline, courtesy, proper wearing of the uniform, and digesting Army chow. Quarters were small wooden huts of slabs of trees with the bark still on, nailed to a wooden frame. There was a small coal stove in the middle of the hut with a pail of water next to it to keep moisture in the air. At night a person was supposed to come around and stoke the fire, which they didn't do, and in the morning the water in the bucket was frozen and there was a light layer of snow over your blanket where the snow had blown in through the cracks between the slabs on the siding.

Spinal Meningitis, colds and the flu were prevalent throughout the camp. When it came time to leave, we lined up on a ramp alongside a railroad train and before we could get on, they took everyone's temperature to be sure you didn't have a fever. If you did, you didn't leave JB. Needless to say everyone was sucking cold air to keep the temperatures down.

Our train took us to Michigan State College in East Lansing Michigan and how wonderful it was to have nice clean warm quarters in the dormitories. We ate in

dining rooms, not mess halls, and the atmosphere was 180 degrees from that at JB.

Prior to and during the war, Commissioned Officers were suppose to have two years of college. There were exceptions like battlefield commissions etc. Fifteen hundred of us arrived at Michigan State and some had a semester or two of college but the majority were fresh out of high school in the 18 year old category. The military name for the unit was CTD for College Training Detachment.

We were there for approximately 5 months going to classes 8 hours a day, 6 days a week. The curriculum covered mathematics, physics, history, english etc., and at the end, and theoretically, we were supposed to have the equivalent of two years of college. Just before we left, we did get 10 hours of orientation flights in small general aviation aircraft like Taylor-crafts and Cubs. After CTD we were back on the train again headed for San Antonio, Texas and SAACC (San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center) and classification and possibly preflight.

The classification process was to determine whether you were best suited to be a pilot, navigator, bombardier or other crew member i.e. engineer, radio operator or gunner. There was a whole battery of tests, physical, mental, psychological, psychomotor etc. The psychomotor test was unusual in that it tested your coordination and how your brain and physical parts of the body reacted working together, especially under stress. After being classified, pilots went across the street to preflight, navigators to San Marcos, Texas and bombardiers to Childress, Texas.

I went across the street to preflight. Preflight was more academics such as mathematics, physics etc., but added was aircraft identification and

Morris Code. I almost blew the final math test. I was called in and told by the instructor that I made 69.5 on the test and that 70 was passing. He asked if I thought I should go on to primary flight training. I said yes because the .5 should be considered as the next whole number. He bought it and I continued on with the rest of my class.

Primary flight training was at a Civilian Flight School in Vernon, Texas. The flight instructors, aircraft maintenance and housekeeping personnel were all civilians but the Detachment Cadre were military. The Commander of the school was an Army Major. We had nice brick quarters, dining hall and other facilities.

We flew the PT-19 which was a Fairchild monoplane, Ranger engine, tail-dragger with two open cockpits in tandem. There was no radio in the aircraft.



PT-19

Communication was one way from the instructor to the student only. The student wore a helmet fitted with a copper gosport (earpiece) that protruded from each side of the helmet. Attached to these two gosports was a rubber hose that ran under the instructor's flight panel where he could yell instructions. This was our first introduction to actually flying an airplane. We were given approximately sixty hours of dual and solo time, taught basics of flight, soloed and some acrobatics. There was a runway on the field but we were not allowed to use it. Ours to use was a big wide open pasture.

At lunch time it was a zoo with everyone trying to land at the same time, although I must admit the procedure we followed, 45 degree entry to the downwind, spacing on

downwind base and final, worked as well then as the FAA AIM outlines the same procedure to-day. We had no fatalities only a few incidents.

My flight had two incidents. One very eager student, being shown how to do slow rolls, forgot to fasten his safety belt and fell out of the airplane. Fortunately, in those days, the Army, always cognizant of safety, furnished all pilots with a parachute. The student popped his chute and landed safely but had to lug the chute back to the base. Lesson learned. The other incident was a student doing solo hurdle stage landings. He leveled off too high, stalled and demolished the aircraft. He was not hurt except for his pride.

Basic Flight Training was at Enid Army Air Field in Enid, Oklahoma (it is now called Vance Air Force Base). We arrived late February 1944, by train again. This was strictly an Army Base. All personnel were military. Most of the instructors were young 2nd and 1st Lieutenants disgruntled because they had been assigned to an instructor's job instead of going off to war zones to shoot down Germans and Japanese.

Unfortunately, it affected their attitude toward the students. We flew the Vultee BT-13 vibrator in two phases, transition and Instrument. The transition phase consisted in learning how to fly a heavier aircraft with greater horsepower, variable pitched prop, canopy, two way radio with intercom and formation. The Instrument phase followed, flying instruments under the hood, Link trainer (simulator), night flying and cross country to test out navigation skills.

Another student in our Flight and an instructor were taking off. About 20 feet off the ground, the propeller flew off. In a stalled condition the instructor walked the aircraft back down to the runway. We were taught this type of recovery flying the BT-13. It was called a rudder control stall recovery.

I had an instructor I couldn't tolerate. At 12 dual hours, I had not soloed. I went to the Squadron Commander and explained

the situation. I was assigned another instructor and after 1 hour of dual, I soloed.



**BT-13
Valiant
in
Flight**

After our three months at Enid, some of us were off to single advanced training in the AT-6 and others to twin engine advanced training. I choose twin engine and went by train, again, to Waco, Texas and Blackland Army Airfield.

Blackland served both as an Army Air Force Training Base and Commercial Airfield for Waco, Texas. We heard that when the Commercial Carriers landed they pulled down the shades on the windows so passengers could not take pictures of the military operation across the field. There was also a big lake at the end of one of the runways.

At Blackland we learned to fly the AT-17, a twin engine trainer. The aircraft had two radial engines, retractable gear, side by side seating and it was a tail dragger. The challenge was learning to fly with more than one engine. That wasn't difficult except when an engine was cut out on one side and you had to cope with the drag it caused.

The instructors had a much better attitude than those tigers in basic. They had the same rank but appeared to be more mature. I didn't have any difficulty learning to fly the airplane, doing formation flying day or night but I did have problems in the instrument phase. Fortunately, I had a very tolerant instructor. The events I remember was one aircraft, with students flying it, landed in the lake off the end of a runway. I don't remember what my infraction was but I did have to walk a few punishment tours on the ramp.

A tour consisted of walking back and forth on the concrete ramp for one hour with a parachute hanging on your rear end. Waco and the ramp were very hot in May and June.

When asked what aircraft I would like to fly after I graduated, I chose the P-38 first and the Martin B-26 second. When told those slots were already taken, my instructor suggested the B-24. I had never heard of the beast. He told me it was a four-engine bomber with twin tails so I said OK. Sounded like a challenge. I graduated on 27 June 1944 as a Flight Officer (F/O) and it was off to Liberal, Kansas for transition training in the B-24.

When passing through Kansas City on my way to Liberal, I contacted my girl friend Mary Lou; she lived in Kansas City. We met at the train station and had about an hour's visit. It was there that I had my first encounter with the Military Police. Seems as a Flight Officer we were suppose to wear what we called a Ruptured Duck on our headgear. I was wearing a Spread Eagle as worn by Commissioned Officers. Small infraction but embarrassing to be written up in front of a girl friend.

Upon arriving at Liberal and while going through processing, I was chewed out by a 1st Lt. administrative officer for the infraction in KC which had been sent to him by the MP's. A few days later we were introduced to the B-24 on the Flight Line. My flight instructor in Advanced had failed to mention that the beast grossed 58,000 pounds on takeoff, carried a crew of ten, and all the flight controls were manual (a real exercise machine).

Standing there looking at the aircraft on the flight line, I thought I'd never learn to get all that metal up in the air and down on the ground again in one piece. This was not like your typical trainer aircraft. It was more than 10 times heavier than the AT-17, two more engines, more instruments to watch in addition to learning to use

turbos, oxygen etc. Seemed impossible to learn but approximately three months later it all fell into place and we graduated.

We were held over another month due to space not ready for us at Crew Training. So a friend Edward Eddy (yes, Eddy Eddy) and I went to Base Flight to get our four hours flight time for pay. They had a BT-13. Oh, we knew the BT-13, flew them in Basic Training. First we had to ask the line chief how to start the thing. Then we almost killed ourselves on takeoff. Very different pressures on the controls of a BT-13 and a B-24. Since there wasn't anything to do in the exciting metropolis of Liberal, Kansas, Eddy and I decided to go AWOL to Wichita, Kansas.

The excitement of the large city wore off in about three days so we went out to the Base hoping for a ride back to Liberal. Fortunately, two Instructor pilots were there and gave us a ride back and also told us our orders were out for Crew Tng. It was very disappointing when we got back because nobody even missed us. Crew Training was to be at *Gowen Field in Boise Idaho.*

On the way to Gowen we stopped off in Lincoln, Nebraska to pick up our crew i.e., Co-pilot, Navigator, Bombardier, Engineer, Radio Operator, Ball Gunner, Nose Gunner, Tail Gunner and Waist Gunner. When we got there, I was told by a Staff Sergeant I didn't have enough rank to be a Pilot of the B-24 and would have to go out as a Co-Pilot. So I signed up with Bob Cox who I knew in Advance Training at Waco and at Liberal.



B-24 on the ramp at Gowen Field

Training at Gowen Field was a very new and unique experience. Everything prior to Gowen, basic military training, academics, flight training in primary, basic, advanced and transition training in the B-24 were all in preparation for the final phase of training at Gowen. Here ten men, from all

parts of the country, different walks of life, having been trained in their own individual specialties, were joined together to act as one unit among the many weapons of war for WWII.

I feel the training at Gowen and all the training we received was the best in the world. There were glitches and people screwed up but for example in my class from the beginning to the end we had no fatalities. Another factor to consider was the majority of those being trained were between the ages of 18 and 22 years old. You might say that they were the best of the worst.

I arrived at Gowen in October 1944 as Co-Pilot for Bob Cox and his crew and trained with them for approximately two months. They were a fine group and Bob Cox was an excellent pilot and A/C commander.

While I was with Bob Cox, my brother Bob Drumm, an Aviation Cadet, visited us at Gowen. He had just finished Basic Flight training in California and was on his way to Texas for his Advanced Training in the AT-17. He didn't have much time to stay and we were scheduled for a night mission. Since it was dark when we were to take off, he joined us on the mission. We had him dressed like the rest of us so no one knew he wasn't part of the crew. We just considered it as part of his advanced training as a Cadet.

About half way through our training, I was told that some other Flight Officers and I were to meet a Board. If we passed, we would be commissioned 2nd Lieutenants. Meeting the board there were 10 questions and 10 points for each question. I think they were hard up for 2nd Lieutenants because all of us made 100%, we found out later. The Squadron Commander called us in on Saturday, told us that there were crews that had lost their Pilots, and

we would be assigned to those crews and go through training again.

I met with the Officers for dinner that night, with the enlisted men on Sunday, and we started to train as a crew at 04:30 Monday morning. Half way through our training we were told that we had been chosen as ...the #1 crew! Competition was real tough.

One of the crew members was late for a flight one morning and there was another violation so we ended up #4 crew at the end of our training. Everything went pretty smooth. All the men were excellent professionals at their individual positions. I felt two, Engineer George Ronnenkamp and Navigator George Iseminger, were outstanding though.

When in training at Gowen we did not always fly the same aircraft. We flew the one we were assigned that day and was in commission.

I recall four incidents that occurred that you might say were not in the training manuals. As a safety factor, I had told the crew that under no circumstance would anyone light up until the Engineer said it was OK to smoke. One morning while on takeoff I smelled cigarette smoke. Just then the Engineer came up and told me one of the gas caps on the left wing had come off and we were siphoning gas. I stayed in the pattern, came back in and landed. Needless to say I had a few chosen words with the guilty culprit, one of the Officers, but it never happened again.

On a night practice bombing mission in January at about 15,000 feet, it was 43 degrees below zero and the heaters were not functioning. Bob Bertram the bombardier was trying his best to put the bombs on the target but with little success. Every time he would announce a "dry run" you could hear a groan go up from the rest of the crew. After about 2 hours we finally got off the range and down to a lower altitude.



Bill Drumm's crew photo, taken at Gowen Field.

**Front row: (Left to Right):
George G. Ronnenkamp, Engineer,
John C. Baldwin, Radio Operator,
Grady B. Yawn, Nose Gunner,
James E. Kincheloe, Ball Gunner,
James T. Pleak, Waist Gunner,
Sidney Bergman, Tail Gunner**

**Back row:
William H. Drumm, Pilot,
Thomas J. Massey, Co-Pilot,
George D. Iseminger, Navigator,
Robert V. Bertram, Bombardier**

We had a night cross country to Las Vegas, Nevada and return. Upon reaching Las Vegas I was informed the #3 engine was running too rich and we had to land for gas and repairs. I didn't argue since it was a safety of flight issue. We spent the night and made the repairs in the morning. We observed they were just building the Flamingo on the Strip at the time.

Just about Christmas time, around the 20th of December 1944 we were on the bombing range and doing some formation flying. We finished on the range and were in formation when we noticed a large mass of weather moving in from the north west. A call was made to the tower at Gowen to come in and land. We were told other B-24's from Walla Walla, Washington that were almost out of gas had priority to land and that we were to divert to Wendover, Utah. Twenty three B-24's from Gowen and Mountain Home landed at Wendover.

We were loaded into 6x6 trucks and driven to an area that had a mess hall, sleeping quarters and a theater and told not to go out of that area or we would be shot. After three days they took us back to our aircraft and told us to leave and don't come back.

I thought it was the most inhospitable base I had ever been on. It was about 1954 or so I was watching the WWII film with Robert Taylor about Col. Paul Tibbets called, *Above and Beyond*, and it finally dawned on me that we had dropped in on the 509th Composite Wing at Wendover practicing how to drop the Atomic Bomb.

Finishing up our training at Gowen we were put on a troop train to Santa Ana, California for further assignment. Rumor had it we would be going to the Pacific. At Santa Ana we were issued both summer and winter clothing and put on another troop train and told that our destination was secret. One car on the train served as a mess hall, others, converted boxcars, were sleeping quarters with bunks four high. Although the train made many stops, we could not get off. Secret Orders you know.

Seven days later, we ended up in Fort Totten, NY. We stayed in New York about four days. It was my first time in the Big Apple. Bob Bertram, the Bombardier and I went down to Times Square and to the theater to see the show *Oklahoma*. Bob had a cousin in the show and we went back stage after the performance to meet her.

We boarded a C-54 in New York and flew to the Azores, Casablanca, Tunis, Cairo, Abadan, Karachi, Calcutta and then to Pandaveswar, India just north of Calcutta. I'm not absolutely sure of all those cities enroute but I do believe we stayed overnight in Casablanca and Cairo. Did not see Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall in Casablanca; the club was closed that night.

Pandaveswar was a sort of staging area for the 308th Bomb Group, 14th Air Force stationed in China. After a few days we were put on a B-24 and flown to Cheng-tu, China for assignment to a Bomb Squadron. On our way over the Hump to

Cheng-Tu, I remember playing Red Dog, a form of poker game on the flight deck of the B-24, at 18,500 feet and sharing an oxygen mask with four other fellows as there were not enough masks to go around. You got the mask when it was your turn to play.

At Cheng-Tu the crew was assigned to the 375th Bomb Squadron in the 308th Bomb Group. We were just beginning our training to drop real bombs on real enemy targets when the word came that the whole Group was being sent to Rupsi, India and would start hauling gas in the B-24's from India to China.

Rupsi was a small village on the Bamaputra River where the river, coming down the Asam Valley, turned south toward Calcutta. The Brits had built a base there sometime earlier with an asphalt paved 6,500 ft runway and living infrastructure. It was modified by the Americans and had a mess hall, dispensary, Base Exchange, clubs, administrative buildings and living quarters. We lived in what were called bashas. A basha was an open air structure with a concrete floor and a straw roof large enough to sleep four people.

The beds were wood with rope stringers supporting a thin mattress. A mosquito net hung down on four sides. Atabrine tablets were taken every day to help ward off Malaria. I remember early one morning, about 3 am, hearing pistol shots about two bashas away. At breakfast, an officer, from that basha, was telling about a tiger clawing at his net and he was trying to unload his .45 at the animal without much success. If he was like me, he couldn't hit the broad side of a barn with a .45 and would probably have much better luck throwing the gun at the tiger. Meals were mostly Spam and "C" rations. Every once in a while the cook would find a bunch of chickens on the open market to break things up.

If we were flying we would be issued a couple boxes of "K" rations which consisted of breakfast, lunch or dinner

fare, 'stuffed' into a Cracker Jack box along with a package of two cigarettes, Lucky Strikes, Camels, Old Gold etc.



**K-Ration
Breakfast
unit**

Flying the Hump, as it was called

when flying over the Himalayan Mountains, was pretty much routine, although there were exceptions. The normal gross load for the B-24 was around 60,000 pounds depending how it was configured and loaded. Most of our flights going over to China would take off with three 750 gallon bombay tanks loaded with aviation fuel, at about 6 or 7 am. We would climb to 18,500 feet for a four and a half to five hour trip to China. On most trips we would land at Kungming or Cheng-tu, unload the fuel and return to Rupsi at 21,500 feet or higher depending on the clearance and weather.

By that time, in 1945, the Japanese had been cleared out of northern Burma and were no factor. The enemy was weather. There were no radio ranges, light lines, VOR's, ILS or GPS facilities. There was one homer about 30 miles west of Kungming. On one occasion I remember coming back, around 16:00 or so and running into a large thunderstorm just west of Kungming. At first we were going up at 1,500 to 2,000 feet a minute with nose down and full power and then before you knew it, we were going down at about the same fpm (feet per minute) with the nose pointed up and full power.

Although we were about 13,500 pounds lighter having dropped off our load of fuel from the bombay, the gross weight of the aircraft was still around 45,000 pounds. That was a lot of heavy metal to be bouncing up and down and especially when the controls and power were also in the opposite direction. We finally worked through that problem and climbed to 21,500 our assigned altitude to find some terrific head winds which cut our ground speed almost in half.

Over in Bahmo in Burma, about a third of the way back, we ran into a horrific electrical thunderstorm with St Elmo's fire et al. The Radio Operator reported spark coming through the shielded cable to his liaison set. He had rolled in his trailing antenna five minutes prior. The solution was to get down to a lower altitude. The minimum altitude at that point on our route was 16,000 ft. I dropped the gear, lowered some flaps, turned on all out lights inside and out, pulled back the throttles to about 17 inches and put out a Mayday to all other aircraft in the area that we were changing our assigned altitude.

Leveling off at 16,000 the static electricity went away and our radios were once again working. There happened to be a C-46 in the area that heard our Mayday and relayed our message on to Jorhat, India control who in turn cleared us at 16,000 ft. and further to 10,000 ft. over Myitkyina and then to 4,500 ft. down the Valley to Rupsi. From Jorhat to Rupsi was about an hour and fifteen minutes. About ten minutes past Jorhat, George Ronnenkamp the engineer, was checking our remaining fuel and told me we would not make it to Rupsi. Evidently, the strong winds we encountered and various power settings fighting the thunderstorms consumed more fuel than we realized. I did a 180 and headed back to Tezpur, which we just past a few minutes prior.

Now this was about 22:00 and there was a scattered layer of clouds at our altitude. There were two fields at Tezpur. One was a 10th AF Bomber Base and the other belonged to ATC. We had to go into the Bomber Base. The Co-Pilot was circling the plane to the left while I tried to determine which was which as we went in and out of the clouds. All of a sudden he asked me to take over and when I looked at the instrument panel, the aircraft was in

a 30 degree bank going down at about 700 ft a minute and number 3 engine was out.

I leveled out, pulled back on the yoke to maintain altitude and pushed all four engines to high RPM while holding left rudder to compensate for the extra power on the left side. George was fast and realized the fuel had run out of #3. Before I could reduce the RPM on #3, George hit the fuel cross feed and that engine went to 3,000 RPM. Then I had more power on the right side, which of course required more right rudder on that side.

It was worse than a Chinese fire drill but we finally got everything under control. I was on the downwind and base legs at reduced power in our attempt to land and didn't realize I was losing power in the engines one at a time. George subsequently told me I only had one engine turning on the final approach and to taxi with #4.

Coming onto the ramp while attempting to park I hit a telephone pole that had a sign on it, "Watch your Wing Tip." It put a hole in the outer wing panel. I got out of the aircraft and was standing under the co-pilots window. I yelled up to George and asked him if the Co-Pilot had turned off the magneto switches. As he put his head out the window to answer me, the window fell out, landed on the ground, and broke. That did it. It was then about 23:00 and we had been up since 06:00 that morning. It was agreed, we would stay there that night.

The next morning I went to the field aircraft Maintenance Officer and explained my dilemma. I needed an outer right wing panel and a Co-Pilots window. He smiled, leaned back in his chair and said very nonchalantly, "I don't currently have your parts on hand, but just wait around here a week or so and one of these B-24's will crash off the end of the runway and we will get you the parts you need." I went back to the crew who were at the

aircraft and told them the story. We all agreed to take off with the hole in the panel and without the window. The flight was a little breezy, but tolerable since it is warm in India.

Had another interesting incident in Cheng-tu, China. We dropped off our load of fuel in Cheng-tu and while going through the checklist found out that number 4 propeller governor was not functioning. I pulled back into a revetment across the runway, opposite Base Operations where George determined after a though examination we needed another governor. Naturally, there was not another one on the field. I found another 308th Bomb Crew, explained our plight, and asked them to have Sqdn. Maintenance send us another governor. We all went to bed that night and when we went out to the Aircraft the next morning we found a generator and a few other items missing.

We had to have those items also so I sent word back to India but in the mean time, I got permission from operations to taxi the aircraft across the runway and park it closer to operations. We set up a two hour watch for that night for each crew member. It was warm in Cheng-tu. About 03:00 in the morning George was laying down on the wing of the aircraft, during his watch, when he heard this sound chug-chug-chug.....It was what we called a cherry picker, a vehicle used to remove engines from aircraft.

It pulled up to one of the engines on our airplane. George stood up, pulled his .45 from the holster and in no uncertain terms stated "the next person to move toward an engine on this aircraft will have his head blown off." I don't know if those were his exact words, but needless to say the cherry picker backed-up and went chug-chug-chug in the direction it came from. Three days later we had our parts and were on our way back to India.

A trip over the Hump and back was considered one mission. Our crew had 27 missions. The Japanese surrendered in August but we continued to fly missions until October. We were supplying aviation fuel to the Chinese Nationalists who were

preparing to fight the Communists for control of China. I think it was probably in June or July that 1st Lt. William Cleveland (Cleve) Davis, another pilot in the Sqdn. from Charlotte, NC and I were selected to go to Calcutta for a little R&R. The Club Officer asked us to pick up some Libation for the Club while there. He gave us 5,000 Rupes (that was about \$166.00), instructions where to go in Calcutta and to contact Pete, the one legged man in a store with a white front that looked like the front of a house.

We got to the area but could not find the store. Finally, found a little kid sitting on a curb that spoke some English and asked him about the store with a white front. It was only about 50 yards from where we were standing. There was a woman behind the counter when we walked in and asked for Pete. At first, she denied knowing any one by that name. After a little discussion, she wanted to know what we wanted with Pete and when we told her to buy a few cases of liquor she said to go next door.

Sure enough when we walked in the store next door, there was Pete with one leg sitting on a stool. If I recall Pete was half Indian and half Italian. We told him we wanted a case of White Horse Scotch, a case of gin and a case of Whiskey. Of course, this transaction was all legal because even though I was only twenty, Cleve Davis was twenty two.

Pete asked if we had transportation because we need to pick up the liquor at different locations. We thought he had the liquor there at the store. Not that simple, so we went back out to the Base at Dum Dum where our Aircraft was parked and we were billeted. The Motor Pool Sergeant at the Base was very cooperative and let us borrow a weapons carrier, especially after we explained to him we would only have the vehicle about three hours,

and those three hours were worth a bottle of White Horse Scotch.

So off we went back to the store with the white front. We picked up Pete, he threw three empty cases in the back end of the vehicle and he gave the directions as to where to go. Maybe I should mention certain areas and streets in Calcutta were off limits to GI's, and if found you were subject to a Court Martial.

That didn't seem to bother the carrying out of our mission. We drove in and out of the restricted areas and Pete would have us stop, go in a home or store, retrieve a bottle of two, three or four of liquor, put them in the proper case and off we would go to another supply point. When the cases were full we paid Pete the 5,000 Rupes, dropped him off at the white store front, drove back to the Base, loaded the liquor into the airplane, locked it up, turned in the weapons carrier, paid off the Sergeant with a bottle of "White Horse Scotch" and went back to town for dinner.

Not having had a good meal for about three or four months, Cleve and I were in the mood for a good steak dinner. We went to the "Great Eastern Hotel" which was British owned and operated. We had a table on a balcony overlooking the main dining room and dance floor where the Brits were having a dinner dance.

The British Military had their families with them, in India of course, because India at that time had been a British Colony for years. The dance was formal with the ladies in beautiful gowns and the men in formal dress uniforms. Cleve and I started off our dinner with a half glass of Cognac followed by a bowl of soup, fish, 3 filets of Mignon each with accompanying vegetables and a salad. The desert was a pie. Cleve took half and I took the other half.

It was a very delightful dinner and I believe the cost, with tip included was \$1.50 each. You can tell we really

splurged. (Labor was very cheap at that time. We paid our houseboys 5 annas a month. The Brits in the area around Rupsi accused us of causing inflation; they only paid them 3 annas. An anna was about two cents.)

After dinner we were walking down the main street when we spotted this American advertised Night Club. The hat check girl explained that it was a private club and we had to be members to get in. About that time an American gentleman walked up and introduced himself as the owner.

During our conversation he asked us what kind of flying we were doing, where we came from etc. He told us he was originally from Los Angeles but due to some unfortunate circumstances with the local law-enforcement authorities in the states he was forced to leave, came to Calcutta and opened this club. He invited us in and had the head waiter get us a table. All drinks and food we wanted were on the house. We couldn't take him up on the food offer, but drinks yes. Needless to say we took off for Rupsi late in the morning, mission accomplished.

I believe it was the middle of October when the Group was ordered back to the States. There weren't enough airplanes to fly everyone in the Squadron back so some flew and others went by boat. The Copilot, Navigator and I were chosen to fly back in "Hump Time" along with Bill Davis' crew and some other Sqdn. ground personnel who had been in India for a long time. Bill and his crew had originally flown Hump Time from the states to India. Our destination was Morrison Field, West Palm Beach Florida.

The Bombardier and the rest of our Crew went home by boat. Since Bill Davis was senior to me, having been in the Squadron longer, he chose to fly the first leg back which was from Rupsi to Karachi, India. I had never gotten sick flying, but about ten miles out of Karachi I lost my cookies.

On the ground I went on sick call and the Doctor gave me some pills. He said I was to take them the next day, when it was my turn to fly, but not until we got in the air

and to let Davis land the airplane when we reached Abadan, in Iran, our destination.

It was about 09:00 the next day when everyone was on board. I cranked up #3 engine then #4 and #2 but #1 wouldn't turn over; the starter was broken. It couldn't be fixed 'till after 15:00 and that was too late to take off because it would put us in Abadan after dark and we were restricted from flying at night. We were flying on the hump at night, bad weather and all, but couldn't do it on the way home.

I was really feeling lousy so I popped the pills figuring they would wear off by the next morning any way. They didn't seem to help, so I went back to the dispensary. The doctor took one look at me, got a mirror and said look at your eye balls, face and hands. They all had a yellowish color. He said you have a good case of Jaundice and you're going to the hospital. In the ambulance I wrote a note, saying where I was being taken, and asked the driver to put it on any bed in the tent I was staying.

Three days later Davis and the crew came by. They said they had been looking all over Karachi for me; evidently, the ambulance driver wasn't too reliable. Davis asked how long I would be in the hospital. Just then the doctor came by and we asked him. He said at least three weeks. Flight Operations was pushing Davis to get moving so the crew kissed me good-by and left Karachi the next day.

After about three weeks, I was out of the hospital and looking for transportation to the U.S. My return to the U.S. is a story in and of itself so I'll save that for a another chapter. By the time I got home it was almost Christmas, 1945 and I spent the holiday with the folks. My roommate from St Benedict's lived in Chicago. I called him and we decided it would be a marvelous

idea if we drove his parents car to Kansas City and met with Mary Lou and the girl he had been dating before we went to war. New Years eve in KC we took the girls to dinner and dancing and had a wonderful re-union. In fact it was such a nice get-together I took the train back to KC about a month later, got a job and stayed.

I had joined the AF Reserve and would fly out of Fairfax, Kansas. Mary Lou was in her final semester at Mount St Scholastica and graduated on May 30th. We became engaged in February and married on June 6, 1946 at St. Margaret Mary Church in Chicago, where I went to grammar school. In the fall I enrolled back at St. Benedict's and like so many returning GI's, and there were a bunch, started a whole new life under the GI Bill on \$90.00 a month.

I was discharged in March 1946, but recalled for the Berlin Airlift in 1948, serving as a commissioned regular. I served in the combat zone during the Korean conflict, and in 1969 was Comptroller, 35th Fighter Wing, PhanRang, Vietnam.

I retired from the Air Force in 1970 as a Lieutenant Colonel. My Medals include the Bronze Star, Air Medal, Air Force Commendation, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign, Japanese Occupation, Korean Service and Vietnam Service.

I earned a B.A. degree from the University of Missouri, Kansas City, and a M.B.A. from the Air Force Institute of Technology, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio.

I worked for a number of different Companies and was successful in sales. I joined the local Kirtland AFB Aero club and the New Mexico Civil Air Patrol Wing in 1981. As a pilot, I flew every aircraft assigned to the wing and during my tenure with the CAP, participated in two National Natural Disasters, the California Northridge Earthquake and Hurricane

Katrina that struck New Orleans and Gulf Coast states.

In addition to taking part in a number of search and rescue missions, I also flew numerous Missions on the Mexico, New Mexico border for Customs and DEA (Drug Enforcement Agency). My National CAP membership expires in August of 2011 and will not be renewed. It is time to retire.

Editors note: In October 2003, Susan Ronnenkamp Boatright, daughter of Bill Drumm's Engineer, George G. Ronnenkamp, found the Museum webpage and the crew photo taken at Gowen Field.

She contacted Gayle and asked if it were possible to contact Mr. Drumm the pilot. Her father was also very pleased to learn "that anyone would have an interest in what we did there."

Gayle contacted Bill who responded, "I have been trying to locate him and the rest of the crew for the past 30 years...This is the best news I had about the crew since we split in Karachi."

The feelings were mutual; George had been looking for Bill for many years as well. "Every time I went TDY, the first thing I would do was grab a phone book and look for his name."

Gayle put them in contact with each other and the years melted away. Over that Thanksgiving holiday, they and their families reunited.



**George Ronnenkamp & Bill Drumm
November 2003**

A very special thank you to Bill for sharing his story with us! ☆

MOST WANTED



➤ Just as a reminder, if you or friends, family, or neighbors have some military items they are thinking of getting rid of, the Museum would be a good place to take them.

We depend on the donations to enhance our collections and would hate to see valuable, in our eyes, items being thrown away or sent to a thrift store. Just recently a WWI Colonel's uniform, he served in a Idaho unit, was given to a local store run by a nonprofit group.

They called and asked about the uniform and we expressed interest but they promptly sold it on Ebay.

So, if you are heading to the thrift store or the dump to get rid of military items, call us first. We can always say no but that item that you think may not be important may be invaluable to us. ☆

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Comments or article suggestions are welcome, contact us at 272-4841 or visit our new web site at: <http://museum.mil.idaho.gov>*

JUST IN CASE Have you sent in your renewal for 2012? Don't forget, donations are tax deductible.

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