

509TH COMPOSITE GROUP



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To The Veterans, Family and Friends of the 509th Composite Group

After a reunion, I like to have a little rest and relaxation. Today Amelia asked if I went into hibernation as it's been so long since the last newsletter.

2012 Reunion Overview – We stayed at an excellent hotel this year; a Residence Inn Marriott. Our rates were considerably lower than they normally offer. Our Thursday night meal was “cookout style” with all the hamburgers and hotdogs you could eat. Friday, we left early for our tour of Whiteman Air Force Base and B2 Bombers.

I think the reason for my long rest after the reunion is because of the frustration with the last minute security requirements by the base. Several weeks before our visit, I was told we need to provide the Social Security numbers of all participants. We had to contact all attendees and remind those whom the base had not heard from after our first request. There were many phone calls between myself, the base and attendees.

Several veterans decided not to attend this reunion; their reason was “we had visited the base before. The difference with this reunion, each one of us was allowed inside the cockpit of the B2 and all 509th veterans were allowed to “fly” in the B2 simulator. We also toured the missile alert facility and had lunch with slide show on the base.

Saturday, we toured the Harry Truman Library at which time they put the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb safety plugs on display for us. After the Truman Library, we ate lunch at Jack Stack Restaurant. It was such a beautiful fall day, we ate a buffet lunch of brisket, turkey and more outdoors.

Our banquet speaker for Saturday evening was Raymond Starzman, also known as “Harry Truman”. He wore clothing similar to Harry Truman, looked like Harry Truman and did an excellent presentation because of his knowledge of his character he portrayed. He could not be “stumped” by tough questions from honorary member, Clay Perkins. Many of us enjoyed having our photo taken with “Mr. Truman”.

Veteran Awards and Presentations - After dinner, Clay Perkins presented the honorary members of the 509th with WWII style leather A-2 jackets with the 393rd patch sewn on the jacket. Each veteran and veteran's widow in attendance, received a partial cash refund of the reunion fee and a long sleeve denim shirt with the 509th emblem embroidered over the left pocket saying veteran and veterans widow. This is an award given only to those who attend the reunion. A shirt embroidered with the emblem and honorary member was presented to Joe Papalia for his work answering many questions about the 509th on the internet and John Coster-Mullen for his work on stopping publication of Book entitled “Last Train to Hiroshima”. Another shirt embroidered benefactor was presented for financial contribution to the reunion funds.

Sunday Business Meeting – A vote was taken to hold another reunion, who will run it and where. The vote for another reunion was positive, Amelia and I were asked to run it and four cities were

proposed; San Diego, New Orleans, Nashville and Kalamazoo proposed by William Miller of the 320th. Kalamazoo received the majority vote and the meeting was adjourned.

Whiteman Visit Photos – Due to the high security on the base, we were not allowed to take cameras or cell phones on the base. A base photographer was assigned to us and he took individual and group photographs. After almost a month of wait and emails, I received a photo disk. There are approximately 44 color photos that can be mailed to you for \$10. Please make your check payable to the 509th Composite Group.

You must have a computer to view the disk. We are not able to provide you with printed photographs.

2013 Reunion – The reunion for 2013 will be held in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Amelia and I have already sent requests for quotes, picked a hotel and signed the contract. The reason we did this so early is because many organizations hold reunions and events in the Kalamazoo area.

Reunion Dates – The reunion dates are Wednesday September 25 through Sunday September 29, 2013. We currently have one event planned and are looking at another. For those of you who attend reunions, you know the time goes too quickly, so for those who want to have an extra day, we are planning a fun event on Wednesday the 25th. Kalamazoo is served by Amtrack and the Kalamazoo Battle Creek International Airport. The hotel we have chosen has a shuttle to the Amtrack and Airport.

Congratulations – At the Sunday business meeting, the veterans in attendance voted to have Tom Bower become an honorary member. He will be an asset to the group.

Sad News – Our sympathy to “Dutch” Van Kirk, 509th Headquarters on the loss of his wife, Jean in November; William Burgmeier 1st Ordnance, February 23, 2012; Leon Smith 1st Ordnance, Weaponeer, October 14, 2012; Wayne Gruning 393rd Bombardier, February 2012; Russell LaCroix 393rd Communications, July 26, 2012; Ira Weatherly 393rd Pilot, September 2012.

Reunion Attendees – With this newsletter, we have included a listing of all who attended this years reunion.

A Veteran Remembers – This month’s A Veteran Remembers is being printed with the permission of Cathy Baldwin, daughter of Al Barsumian.

Amelia and I wish all of you a Very Healthy and Happy Chanukah, Christmas and New Year!!!!

Respectfully,



Bob & Amelia