

## F.A.H.P. News, May 27, 2013

**Associations in World War II:** An article in the *Wilmington News Journal* today, thinking of Memorial Day, mentioned how many World War II vets are falling by the wayside daily. It stated correctly that the youngest of those who served have to be in their mid-80s in 2013. Almost every year I have written about Memorial Day experiences from long ago. It occurred to me that seldom is the composition of a battalion, a squadron, or another military unit discussed. It is likely that a number of draftees from the same area, being called for basic training in the army at the same time, would serve in the same unit and that many of them knew each other before the war. However, in the Air Force, and probably in the Navy and the Marines, it was unusual for those of prior acquaintance to serve together.

In my case, I came across about 300 in weather school, another 60 while forecasting in New Mexico, and probably 250 in our Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, first at Oklahoma City and then at Guam, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. Although two had been freshmen classmates at M.I.T. in the fall of 1942, it was a large class, and I really didn't know them. I never served with anyone from Delaware. Of the 600 plus whose acquaintances I made in the service, two dozen could be considered close friends, most of whom kept in touch via Christmas cards.

In weather school, I seemed to team up with a group from the Philadelphia area, Wally Sonntag, Carl Brandt, Bob White, Aaron Cohen, and Jerry Haas (Bill Schwoebel's uncle, Francis Courtney, was also in our weather class at M.I.T.), and we rushed home and back several times on weekend passes that lasted from Saturday noon until bedtime Sunday. At age 92, Sonntag is still alive and lives near Saratoga Springs; I know Brandt, Haas, and Courtney are deceased, and I've lost track of White and Cohen. We had one reunion of our weather forecasting class, when about 40 of us went back to M.I.T. in June 1995.

Of the 40 "weather men" and others I knew at Roswell Army Air Field in New Mexico, only Anthony E. Rippo, age 91, of suburban Los Angeles still keeps in touch. The flying personnel in the 55<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron were a close-knit group, and several of the two dozen former forecasters like myself kept in touch for many years. The Air Force was probably the most democratic of the services; our B-24 crew consisted of five officers and five enlisted men, and we did many things together. After all, when we landed at Kwajalein to spend the night with a small unfortunate group stationed there, we had to stick together. Where did "my crew" come from?

Dalton F. Newton, the pilot, was an "old man" at 28, one of the oldest pilots in our squadron. He was a graduate of the Citadel in Charleston and was a resident of Lakeland, Florida. Charles E. "Chuck" Fake, the co-pilot, was from Ilion, New York. Theodore J. "Jack" Furry, the navigator, was from Kansas City. Seth S. Sparkes, the flight engineer, was from Saginaw, Michigan. Earl M. Alkek, the radar operator (our radar seldom worked), was from Victoria, Texas. Norman A. "Jake" Jahaske, a gunner, was from Belvidere, Illinois. Robert F. Wagoner, and John Freymann, other gunners, were from California. Stanley J. Gloede, the tail gunner and at 18 the youngest man on our crew, was from Mount Clemens, Michigan. With a 21-year-old

weather observer from Yorklyn, Delaware, our 10-man crew was complete. I have lost track of the other nine, but I know Alkek, Jahaske, and Fake are deceased. The 55<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron had a few reunions, but I didn't know about them until the late 1990s. They found me at my World War II address, and I almost went to one in Dayton, Ohio, about 2000, but unfortunately that was the last one held.

**Work Report:** With five “regulars” away at the Brass in Berks County HCCA Tour, the following 13 were on hand for the work session on Tuesday, May 21: Dave Leon (in charge), Art Wallace, Ted Kamen, Jerry Lucas, Mark Russell, Jeff Pollock, Lou Mandich, Bob Stransky, Jay Williams, Ken Ricketts, Mac Taylor, Emil Christofano, Dennis Dragon, and Steve Glazier.

Work continued on sound insulation for our Lionel train layout, with four members engaged in that project. The remaining green stanchions were sanded and prepared for final painting. A new cable was made and installed in the vaporizer of the Model 740. The three-venturi burner grate moved further along, as the third mixing tube hole was cut and the mixing tubes properly fit in all three holes. Work continued on the 1937 Packard brakes, and the condenser for the Model 735 was further prepared for reassembling.

On Thursday, May 23, the following 11 volunteers answered the call: Tim Ward (in charge) Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Art Wallace, Jerry Koss, Richard Bernard, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Mark Russell, Dave Leon, and a new volunteer Devon Hall. The top and bottom tanks were fastened onto the core of the condenser for the 735, and the hinges on a rear door of the 607 was adjusted for a better fit. Insulation was fit and glued to the underside of the hood for this car. The Models 725 and 740 were prepared for the May 27 Memorial Day parade in Kennett Square.

The Models 76 and 87 performed well on the tour, under the careful operation of Steve Bryce, Bill Schwoebel, Jerry Novak, Kelly Williams, and Tom Marshall. The 87 made about 300 miles in three days of touring, and the 76 about 365 miles in four days, including a torrential downpour on Thursday. The cars returned home on Friday and were unloaded and cleaned up on Saturday, May 25.

The Models 71, 76, 725, and 740, as well as the '32 Packard, are expected to take part in the Memorial Day Parade in Kennett Square on Monday, 5/27.