B-29 Wings of the Marianas Reunion June 15-18, 2017

The reunion was held at the Hyatt Regency in Wichita, Kansas. The hotel has 18 floors and is located adjacent to a beautiful park along the Arkansas River. Cathy Debbrecht made all the excellent arrangements for the hotel and our activities.

Thursday, June 15. Informal meeting in the lobby of the hotel. Veterans found plastic containers similar to athletic trophy cups with their names inscribed and filled with candy. There were 15 veterans at the reunion. Attendees came from California to New York from the west to the east and from Montana in the north to Texas in the south. The Memorabilia Room was set up by David Stitt. He had large posters on the walls describing the work of the B-29s. He also brought books and descriptive from the Pratt Museum to the exhibit. Another feature was the video display of Mark and Barbara Martin who had collected many, many videos featuring B-29. They had prepared what seemed like one hundred videos on a flash drive which they had on sale for a very modest price. There was also a Hospitality Room on the 18th floor. It had a magnificent view of the city.

Friday, June 16. Field trip to the B-29 Museum at the Pratt AFB. There were many items on display that were of interest to B-29ers. One feature of the Memorial Park is memorial bricks. Sandie Gillard and Doug Comella have sponsored bricks. Lunch was at the Uptown Café in Pratt. It turned out to be unusually large for a town the size of Pratt. The food was excellent. After the lunch one group returned to the hotel. The others went on to the All Veterans Memorial for a Memorial Service. That evening, the excellent dinner was followed by musical entertainment by Gordon and Marilyn Stubbe.

Saturday, June 17. After breakfast, the annual meeting was held. The members were enthusiastic about holding a reunion in 2018. No decision was made on the city. The current slate of officers and board was reelected. Following the annual meeting, there was a trip to the airport hangar where Doc, the restored B-29, was quartered. There was an opportunity to climb aboard and take photos. The next stop was the Old Town district at the River City Brewery where steak along with fish and chips was served.
In the afternoon, Mark Maloy gave a presentation of how he got started in doing research on the 497\textsuperscript{th} Group after learning of relatives participating in WWII. There was a banquet that evening with speakers. Master Sergeant Bowman gave orders to selected individuals. There were two featured speakers for the evening: M/Sgt William S. Stacey, III and M/Sgt Devin R. Kay. Stacey joined the Air Force in 1985 and has had a great deal of experience. M/Sgt Kay joined the Air Force in 2002. He has had a great deal of experience with in-flight refueling operations. A third speaker was Buck Cahall who described the purpose and meaning of his visit to Tinian. A salute was given to all fathers for Father’s Day (the next day) initiated by a legacy member.

Sunday, June 18.

10:30 Description of sources available for information on veterans: FOLD3, Library of Congress Oral History Program, 497\textsuperscript{th} and 500\textsuperscript{th} Bomb Group websites.

11:00 Presentation by Jim Bowman on technical features of the B-29 from tail to nose.

Additional Notes: Dennise March (DenniseMarch@gmail.com) has agreed to coordinate data/information coming in for the 498\textsuperscript{th} Bomb Group. Roy Wall (rwall816@gmail.com) is the representative for the 499\textsuperscript{th} Bomb Group. Ed Lawson for the 497\textsuperscript{th} & the 500\textsuperscript{th}.

At the end of the Reunion, veterans were presented a hand-knitted shawl/small blanket, a cap, and a small bag suitable for change. All these had an emblem plus the motto, “Semper Paratus.” These gifts were sent by Paul Malnove (veteran, 9\textsuperscript{th} Bomb Group, 313\textsuperscript{th} Wing) of Jacksonville, Florida.

One comment heard was, “I have been attending Reunions for many years, and the enthusiasm shown at this one transformed the organization from an association to an extended family.”
Veterans at Dinner

Veterans in Memorabilia Room Prepared by David Stitt
Back Row (L-R): Richard Martin, unknown, Clint Osborne, Jack Rodin
Front Row (L-R) Dick Baile, Jean Allen, Charles Chauncey, Chum Bohr, Carl Barthold, Charles McCoy, Jack Cramer, Clyde Barnhart, Ed Hyde, Ed Lawson, Hugh Phillips

Veterans at Pratt Museum
Sandie Gillard holding brick for Bill Thorrat.

Description of Doug Camella’s plaque (being prepared) shown on white poster.

Commemorative Bricks at Memorial Park, Platt AFB.
B-29 Museum at Pratt

Jim and Nancy Lea Houghton 313th

Hap Halloran Exhibit at Museum

Jack Rodin and Ed Hyde 315th

Veterans’ Uniforms worn at Banquet
Tight for some, very tight for others.

Exhibit Cases at Museum
B-29 Wings of the Marianas

Yes! I want to continue as a Partner and help the with its mission its mission of preserving and perpetuating the glorious memories of courage and heroism of the men of World War II.

The B-29 Wings of the Marianas is recognized as a non-profit organization under Section 501 © (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Checks can be made out to: B-29 Wings of the Marianas and sent to:
B-29 Wings of the Marianas, 19201 Highway 12, #261; Sonoma CA 95476-5413
Annual Dues $25. Contributions___ $15 ___ $20 ___ $30 ___ $50 ___ $100 ___ Other

Name ____________________________________________ Address_________________________________

Telephone (         ) (         ) (           )     E-mail ________________________________

If Legacy, Name of Person to Whom Related_____________________________________________________

Wing: ________________Group____________Squadron____________Other__________________

(If Other, Please give further information)____________________________________________________

B-29 Museum Membership Application/Renewal

The B-29 Museum holds the memorabilia collection of the B-29 Wings. It has extensive exhibits and educational programs.

YES! I want to join and help the B-29 Museum with its mission of preserving and perpetuating the glorious memories of courage and valor of the men who trained at the Army Air Fields in Kansas during World War II. The B-29 Museum is recognized as a non-profit organization under Section 501 © (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Contributions are deductible. Fiscal year: January 1-December 31st.

Checks can be sent to: B-29 Museum, Inc., and sent to P.O. Box 29, Pratt, KS 67124.

Annual Dues: ___ $20. ___ Life Membership $200. Contributions___ $15 ___ $20 ___ $30 ___ $50 ___ $100 ___ Other ___

Total______

Name _____________________________ Address_________________________________

Telephone (         ) (         ) (           )     E-mail ________________________________

If Legacy, Name of Person to Whom Related_____________________________________________________

Unit in the 73rd: ________________Group____________Squadron____________Other__________________

(If Other, Please give further information)____________________________________________________