

AIR GUNNERS' ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER NO. 1

Box 171, Pine Falls,
Manitoba. ROE 1MO.

MARCH 1983.

RE-UNION, 1983:

To date I have received responses from eight people who wish to join our proposed Association and also attend the Winnipeg Reunion in September. The Reunion therefore is still very tentative and I shall be keeping those who have indicated their interest informed as to future developments. Perhaps we could say a certain number would indicate a "GO" (10-15-20, etc.). What do you think. We will have to make a definite decision by the end of May, latest.

If the reunion become a reality, we would do what we can to assist those requiring accomodation. We would also ask the Manitoba Department of Tourism to mail out brochures re Hotels, Campgrounds, etc. to those attending.

We have a couple of ideas on a suitable meeting place, but will not move on this until a firm commitment is reached on the Reunion.

So far five or six wives of our members have said they will attend - and that is just great! We will try to lay on a program that will please them!

#

AIR GUNNERS' ASSOCIATION:

The support I am receiving from Ken Dicks (Thunder Bay) has encouraged us to continue in our efforts to form a Gunners' Association. We have arranged to have notices to this effect placed in the Legionary Magazine; the Royal Canadian Military Magazine; and the Bulletin of the Wartime Pilots and Observers Assoc. (WPG). Ken has volunteered to use whatever media available in the Lakehead area to spread the word.

What we need is the support of each of you: first, in joining our Association; and second, to spread the word to your ex-gunner friends and making use of any means available in your area to advertise our intention (local newspapers; clubs; Radio; T.V. etc.) and soliciting membership in our Association.

Extra Application forms are available on request - or, better still you can copy the one attached.

#

#####

We have been contacted by Mr. Ralph Wefel of California who was a S/Sgt. Radio-Op/Gunner (Lower Mid-Rear Waist Window, using 2 hand-held .50's) with the 9th USAAF. He completed 26 missions with a B-26 (Marauder) Squadron. We have written to Ralph indicating that we would be in favor of forming an International Air Gunners' Association, with a Canadian and American Division. It is hoped that he will be able to enlist the assistance of other ex U.S. Air Gunners who will help him develop a membership campaign.

#####

"SHORT BURSTS"

For those of you who may remember John "Gabby" Wallace from #10 B&G. He has been residing in Australia for several years now. His wartime experiences include being the sole survivor of three crews, each of whom were shot down: (1) over Base; (2) over the Channel; (3) over Germany, from where he made his way back to Britain via Portugal.

#####

A book dealing with Wartime Air Gunners is being compiled by Mr. Sidney Allinson, 24 Ravencliff Crescent, Scarborough, Ont. M1T 1R8. He would be pleased to hear from any of you who might share interesting anecdotes of your wartime experiences (or those of someone you knew). Don't be shy!! Such a book about the much overlooked, under-rated, lowly (but Good Looking) Air Gunner is long overdue!

#####

Bill Dwyer tells me he is the PRO for his Legion Branch in Stoney Creek, Ont. I hope that means we can count on his support in that area of the country. What say - William?

#####

A copy of this Newsletter will be going out to W. E. "Chick" Thomas of Winipeg, who was the "other" Gunner in the crew of John Watters. We hope that he will decide to become a member of our group.

#####

In addition to being together during Manning, Ground and Gunnery School, it seems that Al Schafer and I were neighbors while on "Ops". He being stationed at Oulton (214) while I was at Foulsham (192) both in 100 Group. I believe our Drem Lights interlocked, if I remember correctly! Murray Peden, the Pilot/Author of "A Thousand Shall Fall" and "The Fall of the Arrow", also has a book entitled, "A Pilot for 214", and flew Flying Ports from that base. Perhaps you knew of him, Al.

#####

Ken Dicks and I plan on attending the 4th Commonwealth Aircrew Reunion to be held in Winnipeg September 1984, under the auspices of the Wartime Pilots and Observers Assoc. (Wpg). I know there will be many ex AG's in attendance, and we shall be armed with Application Forms and Receipt Books! Attendance is expected to be in the 1000's.

#####

Any suggestions for: A "Name" for our Newsletter??
Membership Card Design (International)

#####

"FINAL APPROACH"

Paid-Up membership for 1983, to date:

	<u>No.</u>	<u>B&G</u>	<u>Sqdn</u>	<u>Grp</u>
John Wallace, Townsville, Australia	-	#10	-	-
John Donnelly, Sicamous, B.C.	R274978	#10	426	6
Robert Blake, So. Edmonton, Alta.	R290811	MacDonald	-	-
Al Schafer, Calgary, Alta.	R258446	#10	214	100
Bert Trainor, Victoria Bch, Man.	C8892	Britain	427	6
John Watters, Val Caron, Ont.	R266615	#10	227	5
Gord Mask, Kingston, Ont.	R281441	#10	356	India
Ken Dicks, Thunder Bay, Ont.	-	-	-	Burma
Charlie Yule, Pine Falls, Man.	R263835	#10	192	100

We sincerely hope that those of you who have not yet committed yourself to membership will decide to join us. If you find it inconvenient to attend the Planned Reunion in 1983, that should not deter you from becoming a member of our Association!

It is our hope that this organization will lead to contacts through a periodic (Quarterly) Newsletter; Reunions in various locations of the country; exchanges of news, etc. You will probably renew many old relationships with people who have shared similar experiences.

FUTURE NEWSLETTERS WILL ONLY BE MAILED TO THOSE WHO ARE PAID-UP
"AIR GUNNER ASSOCIATION" MEMBERS FOR 1983.