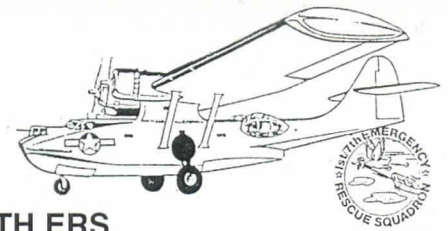


1st. and 7th. Emergency Rescue Squadrons



World War II
Serving in
Europe, India
and Okinawa
1943-1945





A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE 1ST AND 7TH ERS

The 1st ERS was formed at Hunter Field, Savannah, GA in late summer of 1943, comprised of nine PBY5A's (Army designation OA10) and 7 man flight crews – pilot, co-pilot, navigator, 1st engineer, 2nd engineer and radar and radio operator/gunners. An EM medic was added later. It was activated in compliance with Gen. H.H. Arnold's order that such a unit be organized and sent to the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations with the least possible delay. The squadron was transferred to Boca Raton, FL for transition training, where it was joined by ground crew specialists and headquarters personnel. The pilots and engineers had previously been trained by the Navy at Pensacola, FL. Simulated rescue flights were flown, cross country, navigation and practice water landing missions on the Atlantic and Lake Okeechobee. After several months the squadron, consisting of 3 operational flights was shipped out to Camp Patrick Henry, VA. After final check of equipment and personnel, the squadron, comprised of 46 officers and 159 enlisted men, proceeded overseas from there in late January 1944 on the S.S. General Billy Mitchell. Without convoy, the Mitchell left Hampton Roads, VA in March 1944 and made the crossing without mishap, arriving at Camp Don Passage, Casablanca, French Morocco. Ground crews were transported in the infamous 40x8 rail cars, from Casablanca to Bizerte's Sidi Ahmed Air Base, and on to Corsica by LST. Flight crews, however proceeded by rail as far as Port Lyautey, Naval Air Station where new PBY aircraft were picked up and flown to bases at Ajaccio, Corsica, (C Flight) Foggia, Italy (B Flight) and Grottaglie, Italy (A Flight). The 3 flights made up of 3 planes and approximately 70 men each were commanded by Lt. Col. Pardue. Flight C conducted the first operational mission and A & B Squadrons began coverage of the Adriatic Sea for survivors of ditched bombers from Balkan raids.

In the following year approximately 300-350 survivors of the USAF, RAF, France, other allies and even German crews were rescued, often under extreme weather conditions and frequent fighter enemy action and shore battery shelling. One Catalina, disabled from shore gunfire after the rescue of a downed aircrew, then joined their "recent pick-ups" in rubber dingys until rescued by a British Patrol boat.

In 1944, with bomber bases moving north and minimum over water flights, the 1st ERS was split with half staying in the Mediterranean while the other half transferred to CBI under the 10th AF. Our new commander was Lt. Col. Prim. Leaving Europe, Flights A & C ground personnel left Bari, Italy by Liberty Ship for India, docking in Oran, Algeria, Port Said and Suez. Prevented from traversing the Suez Canal, trucks transported them to Cairo, Egypt for a week stay, then back to Suez and aboard the same ship, enroute to Bombay, India. Boarding a train to Calcutta, a river boat and again a train, they finally arrived at Agartala, India about a week or so after the flight crews.

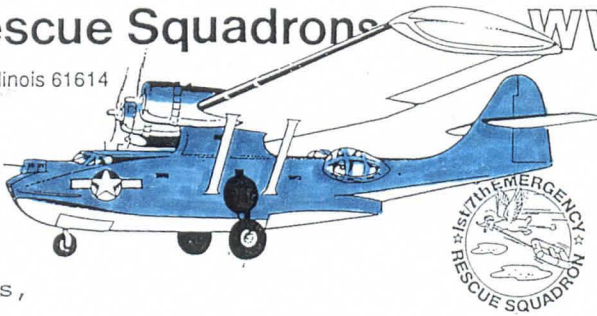
Meanwhile, flight crews were flown to India via an Egyptian stopover and a weeks delay in Karachi, India. Operating from a British base at Agartala, India, the redesignated 7th ERS effected additional rescues for about 6 months. In India, we were joined by B-17's with life boats slung beneath their fuselage. After 9 months, the entire squadron was again transferred, this time to Okinawa, near Japan by troopship via Colombo, Ceylon, Australia, New Guinea and Leyte, Philippines where official rescue missions were discontinued with the dropping of the atom bomb. The squadron was deactivated at Biloxi, MS in 1946 or 1947. The squadron insignia was officially accepted after the war and the squadron was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for our 1944 efforts.

In 1944, nearly 50 years after the war, a 1st/7th ERS reunion was organized in Peoria, IL. Included were both squadrons since many served in both the 1st and 7th, but new personnel joined the new squadron in India and thus were only 7th ERS members.

1st & 7th Emergency Rescue Squadrons WWII

7150-A North University / Peoria, Illinois 61614
Phone (309) 692-3445

CHUCK DILL



Dear Emergency Rescue Members,

The development of this 1st and 7th ERS memory book from WWII, has been a thoroughly pleasant project for me. It has been nostalgic receiving 50 year old coveted photos from many of you to form the nucleus of this book, which I hope will recall a flood of good memories of our activities during service in Europe (with the 12th AF), India (the 10th) and Okinawa (the 8th)

We were formed as the 1st ERS but upon being transferred to India, were redesignated the 7th ERS (which accounts for some 1st ERS members, some 7th ERS members and some 1st and 7th. Also we were joined in Agartala, India by B-17 crews equipped with underslung lifeboats to enable us to expand our rescue capabilities.

I have enjoyed coordinating our Peoria reunions. It is a constant challenge to find new members, come up with different mementos annually and arrange tours, meals, rooms and activities. Thank you all for your consideration, support and friendship over the years. I "wouldn't've" done it without you! The most important thing to occur to me in all this was finding each of you...my valued friends - the guys with whom I have common interests, warm relations and solid, dependable companionship... of searching military archives, haunting vets organizations, the Vet Administrations, perusing manuals, surfing the internet, etc. always looking for new names and address of old friends and comrades..like Bill McDonald and Kaiser, etc. I hope to locate more of them annually. there has been no greater thrill or gratification than to hear an old familiar voice on the phone or receiving mail from a new found buddy thought lost forever. Many of you may have changed with the years, but your voices sound '44.

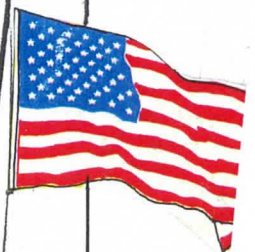
The downside, of course, are the deceased...friends like Bebach, Crow, DeRidder, Gannon, Schoenberger, Landrum..to name a few! Also those I've seen or talked to since the war who never made it to Peoria..Narber, Holzer, Nonemacher, Bill Welling, Laurent, Doc. Smith, etc. and those we enjoyed briefly once or twice more... Cummins and Sackis. That part is depressing, but overall its been a great experience, even for Barb (who was 7 years old when we came home from overseas!)

May all of you enjoy long lives accentuated with good health, happiness and old and new friendships. As Lincoln once said, "Am I not destroying my enemies when I make them my friends?"

Warm personal regards,

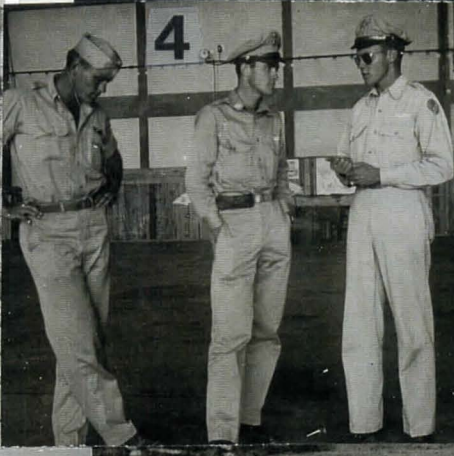
Chuck

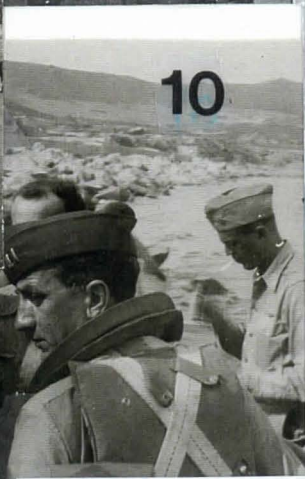
Chuck (& Barb)



(ALL L-R)

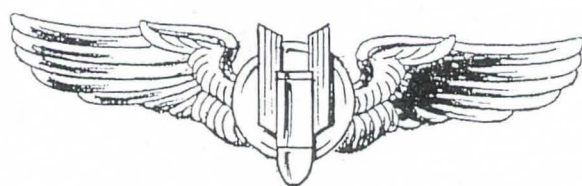
1-Main Blvd. Ajaccio, Corsica 2- Valario & Arab Soldier 3-
Haapanen, Raiford, Schoenberger, Keiser 4- Wells, __?__, Col.
Pardue 5- Standing-Frye, McMullin, Wightman, Case
-Seated-Messler and Dierks 6-Front-LaSater, Milburn Back-
Hendrix, Hughes, Schneider 7- Texeria, Dent 8-Bell 9-Wells
and Buckholz 10-Sexton, Mork, Eisman 11-Working Cats





L-R-

- 1- Schott, Crow, Smith, Dill, English, Mingle (back) Trinca Jarman
- 2- Asbury (foreground) 3- Mingle, Jarman 4- Harris, Murphy 5- India
- "Basha" Quarters 6- __?__, Connell Munoz 7- American Survivors
- 8- Narber, English, Dill, Denton 9- Cummins 10- Dwyer
- 11- Col. Prim 2- Capri 13- Cagliari, Sardinia





Upper Left- B-17 with rescue boat and Okinawa line area
 1-Back-Tanner, Shellenbarger, Mulcahy, Front-Savini, Hall, Riken 2- Smith,
 Reginer, Ogle, Jarman 3-Murphy, Risedorf 4-Reginer, Milburn, Wendlandt
 5-Edwards 6- Crow, Boswell 7-Lt. Welling, Jarman 8-Murray 9-Decesari,
 Solstad 10-Narber 11-Risedorf & Elsie, Vera & Cec Currier 12-Doyle Jones
 13-Miccili





1



2



L-R

1. Banfly, Wendlandt, Ruckman
 2. Jarman, Barrow-3. Walton, Eisman,
 Cummins, Ross-4. Murphy, Landrum,
 Isdell, __?__, (front) Russo-5. Stahl
 Boswell-6. Mulcahy, Arnold, Tanner,
 Shellenbarger-7. Bruner, Yelland
 8. Heilman, Dr. Rainer-9. Currier
 10. Sackie, Wildhack-11.
 Nonnemacher, Dr. Smith, Col.
 Prim



3



4



5



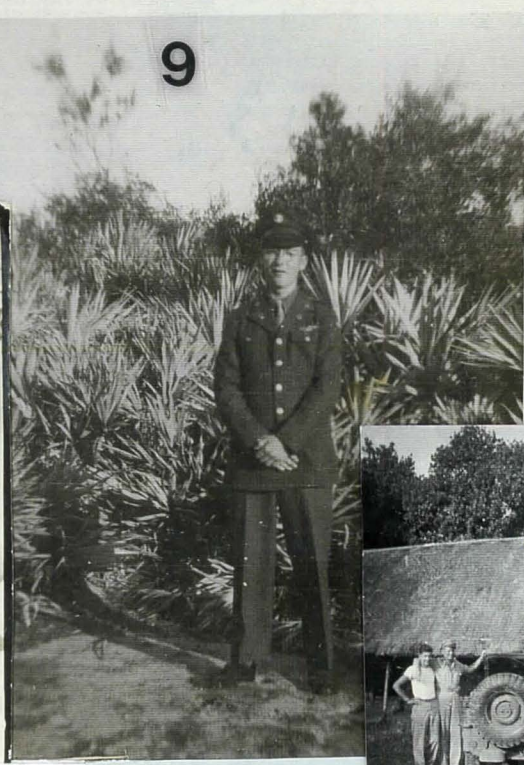
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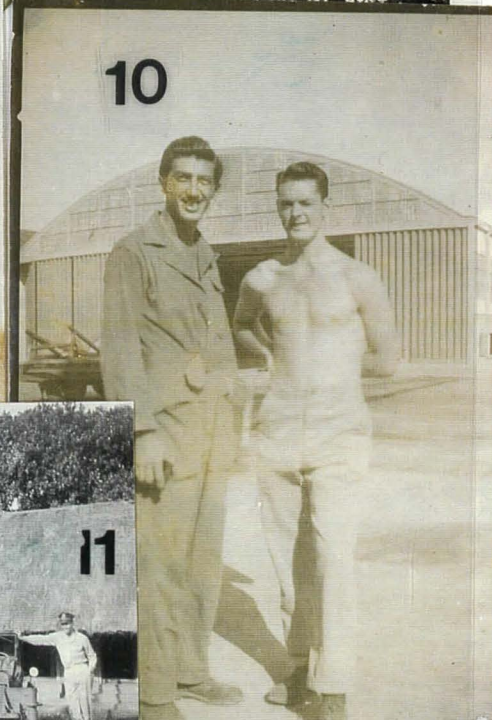
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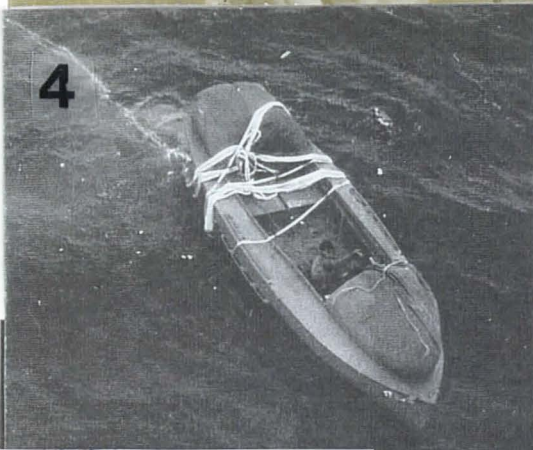
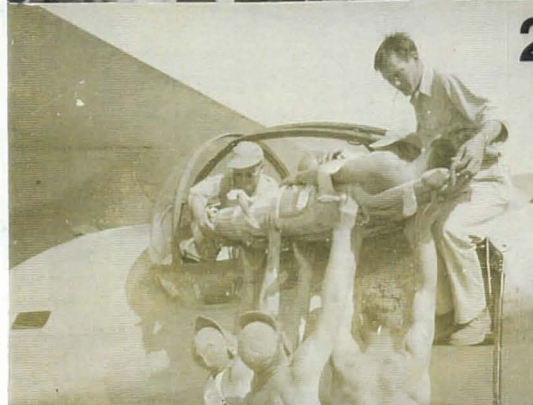
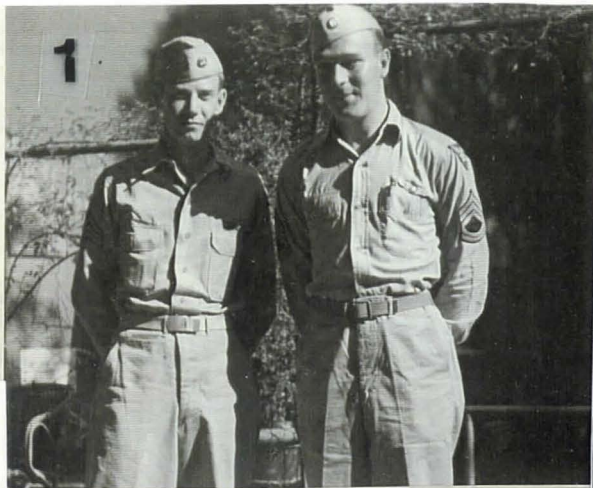


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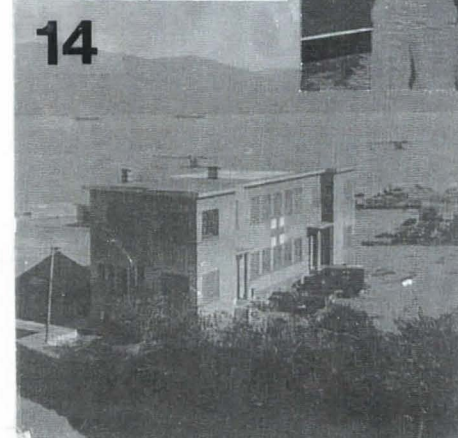
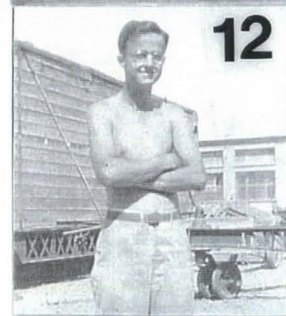
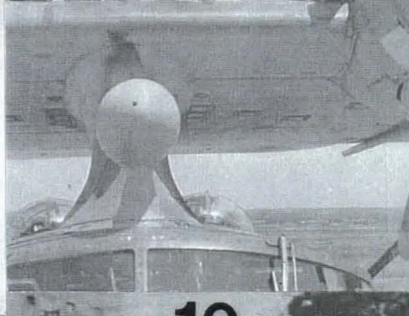
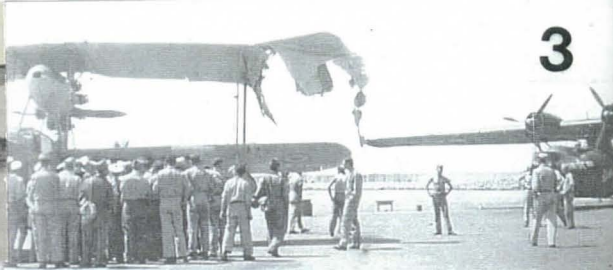
1-O'Brien, White 2-Wounded Pilot
3-Nonnemacher, Witt, Shellenbarger
4- Survivor rescued 3rd time in one month
5-Bruner, Sackis, Martindie 6-(back)
Stonecipher, Logan, Coronado, Hawkins
(front) Femino, Creathbaum 7-Col. Pardue,
Searfoss, Welling 8-MD's Smith and Madison
9-Phelps, Sheehan, Brady 10-(front) Logan,
Hawkins (back) Walker, Col. Prim, Col.
Greenback 11-Schneider & banana
12-Wehrlin & Chichi 13-Foggia rescue
14-Ajaccio shower & EM tent area



L T O R

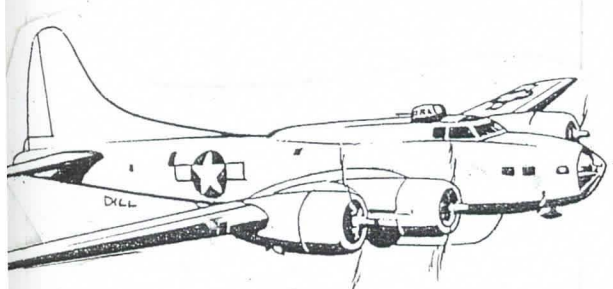
1- O'Brien 2- "Frenchman", Voshell, Merriman, Front - Neimiec
 3- Merriman, P. Wilson, 4- Frye 5- Cavallo, Harris 6- Schott 7-
 Dr. Smith 8- (Back) Trinca, Dill, Holzer, Narber, Lussier,
 (survivor), Jarman (Front) English, Murray 9- Connell, Sgt.
 Welling 10- Hellman 11- Lakey, Martindic, Brown, Front-
 Bobich, Wozelek 12- Bilsland 13- Melancon, Dierks, Heilman,
 Campbell, Connell, ___?___ 14-Yelland, Babcock, Brown





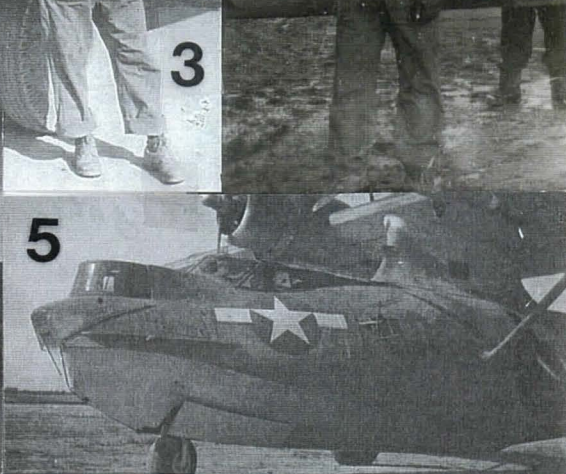
17-Standing-Col
Pardue, Dr. Smith,
Walton, Blier
Seated-Murray,
Jarman, --?--

1.Neimiec-2.Catalina-3.French Walrus which collided with Mingle, killing him and Rickwald-4.Smith & Wzolek
5.Bringing in 4 German survivors. Dill standing and Trinca seated on nose-6.Front: Lasher, Melvin, Bileland, Wilson
Back: Smith, Wzolek, Kidd, Laurent, Gannon
7.Bileland-8.Butler at Taj Mahal, Agra, India -9.First Sgt. Loeffler-10.Sacred cow, Karachi, India-11.Pearson Wilson-12.Heilman-13.Witt-14.Med. Bldg, Ajaccio, Corsica-15.Riesdorf, O'Brien, Wilson, Schoenberger
16.Smith holding RAF body with grabble pole as Lt. Alfred removes identification, before leaving half-eaten airman in the water.

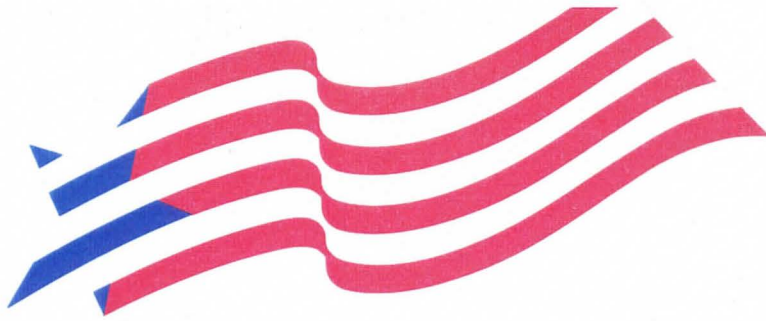


L -R

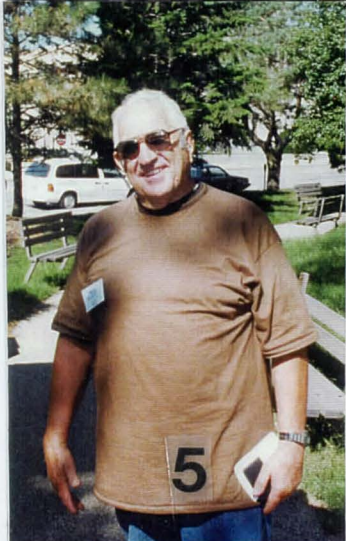
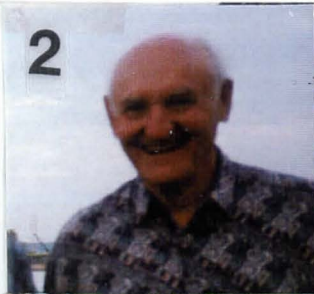
1.Smith, Wilson, Wildhack-2.Risedorf, Melancon-3.(Front) Spier, Byrd, Cochran, Blough (Back) Rindt, Borsch, Yunick, Reckling-4.(Front) Boswell, Dierks, (Rear) Landrum, Dill-5.Dierks, Cooley, Risedorf (Kneeling) Willoughby-6. B Flight-7.Holzer, Dill (top)-8.Rindt, Flint, Cochran-9.Officers tent area-C Flight-10.Asbury-Completion of rescue-11.Mork, F.O. Murphy-12.McMullin-13._?, Dr. Madison, Martincic Narber (Front) Russo, _?-14.Cummins(with glasses), Haapanen (on tractor), Kaiser (behind Hap), Sgt. Welling (front of Hap), Cooley (on Dingy)-15. Sweating out mission with casualties. Dwyer (left) _?



L-R--1.Utley-2.(Back) Holcomb, Fraser, Challenger (Front) Schoch, Vandergriff, Liegl-3.Alley-4.Creathbaum-5.OA10 6.O'Brien-7.Stovell, Haiden, Carey Epperjese, Edwards 8.Posterli-9.Orello, Lewis, Frank, Naves, Diel, Victor, Mario, Joe (2nd, 3rd & last 3 are Yugoslav kitchen help) 10.Whedbee & Barrow-11.Brady, Phelps, Lowry (Front) Rapp, Stessel (Back)-12.Searfoss-13.Coronado-14.Bourque- 15.Coronado, Graham, Walker, Stonedipher, Femino, Creathbaum



L - R---1.Melancon, Tandler, Munoz-2.Bell-3.Chuck & Barb Dill, John & Lois Sackis-4.Arnold & Ann Bockman-5.Flint-6.(Front) Cavallo, Trinca, (Back) Dill, Brown, Risedorf, Murphy-7.Bill & Gwen Mallory, Bickey Fox-8.Dill & Welling '94-9. Dill & Jarman '94-10.Currier, Risedorf, Trinca, Brown





1



2



3



4



5

ALL L-R

1-Brown, Cavallo, Risedorf, Dill, Murphy, Trinca, Currier
2-Risedorf, Whittamore 3-Searfoss 4-Brown, Trinca
5-Butler 6-Fox 7-Niemiec, Munoz, D. Smith 8-Gwen & Bill
Mallory, Bicky & Geo. Fox 9-Rose Schneider, Birdie
Bourque, Barb Dill & Bickey Fox 10-Ernie & Jayne
Stonecipher, Barb Dill 11-Rev. Denton 12-Brown, Sackis,
Melancon, Tendler, Munoz 13-Stonedcipher, Logan,
Hawkins, Creathbaum, Walker, Graham



6



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11



12



13

13



1-Mr. & Mrs. Creathbaum 2-Jim Witt 3-Front-L-R Rose Schneider, Bickie Fox, Jayne Searfoss, Birdie Bourque Back-Barb Bilsland, Barb Dill, Melba Cyphers (Missing-Betty Waltrip, Jo Jordan) 4-Mr. & Mrs. Sehllenbarger 5-Smith, Bilsland, Stahl 6-Mr. & Mrs. Butler 7-Lois Sackie, Jayne Stonecipher, Mickey Rome, Madge Hawkins, Jayne Searfoss, Gina Cavallo 8-Mr. & Mrs. David Smith 9-Gill 10-Fox 11-Jordan, Witt, Logan, Graham, Walker 12-Hawkins, Stonecipher 13- Mickey Rome, Jayne Stonecipher, Gina Cavallo, Barb Dill 14- Cummins 15- Mrs. Gordon Wortz



1997 REUNION

L - R-Front Row--Chuck Dill, Walt Searfoss, Ed Niemiec -Row 2--Sam Gill, Willie Bourque, Geo. Fox, Jack Cyphers, Paul Jordan, Ken Risedorf, Walt Brown, Jim Witt, John Schneider--Row 3--Dave Smith, Chas. Waltrip, Len Bileland, Harold Stahl (Missed Picture-Carey & Westberg)



1996 REUNION

L - R--(Kneeling) Melancon, Whittamore, Borque, Flint--Middle- Denton, Murphy, Schneider, Risedorf, Creathbaum, Mallory, Grahman, Bockman, Walker, Smith, Logan, Bileland, Fox, Gill--Back--Stonecipher, Hawkins, Dill, Cyphers, Jordan, Witt, Bell (Missed Picture-Niemiec, Trimeloni, Haiden, Stahl)



1995 REUNION

L-R-Front Row--Smith, Brown, Niemiec, Stonecipher, Hawkins, Searfoss, Cavallo, Row 2--Sackis, Munoz, Whittamore, Tandler--Row 3--Murphy, Risedorf, Dill, Melancon (Missed Picture Bockman)

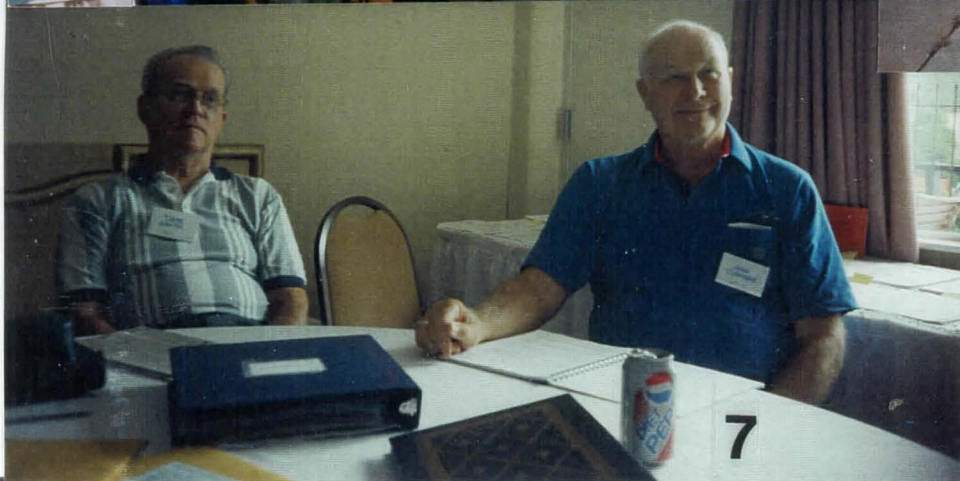


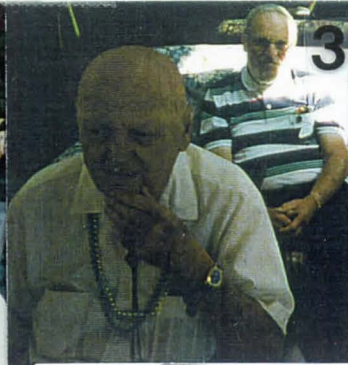
1994 REUNION

L - R-Front Row--Bockman, Fox, Whittamore, Butler, Risedorf, Niemiec--Row 2--Cavallo, Denton, Mallory, Brown, Gill, Row 3--Dill, Murphy, Shellenbarger (Missed Picture Sackis, Trinca, Cummine)



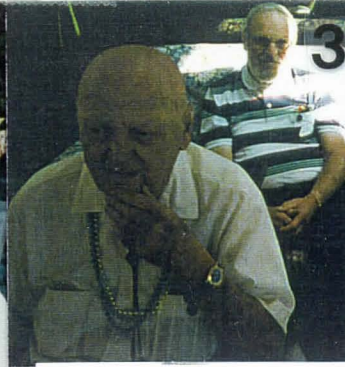
(ALL L-R) 1-Mr. & Mrs. Creathbaum,Dill, Melba Cyphers, Risedorf, Mr. & Mrs. Schneider, Cyphers 2-Jordan, Witt, 3- Graham, Walker, 4-Schneider, Mr. & Mrs. Bisland 5- Bourque 6- Mrs. Trimeloni, Cyphers, Mickey Rome, Melancon, Trimeloni 7. D. Smith, Cyphers 8-Shellenbarger, Mr. & Mrs. Mallory 9-Flint 10-Bilsland, Gill, D.Smith 11-Mr. & Mrs. Cavallo 12-Schott





1-Sam Gill, Ed Niemiec-2-Wm. welling-1994-3-Searfoss, Gill
4-Stahl, Gill-5-Dill, Jarman, 1995-6-Schneider-7-Peoria from
hospitality room-8-Barb Bilsland, Geo. Fox, Melba Cyphers,
Bickey Fox-9-Bourque, Jordan, Waltrip-10-Bourque, Searfoss
11-Waltrip-12-Cavallo, Murphy, Dot Murphy-13-Elsie and Ken
Risedorf-14-Jo Jordan-15-Jordan, Creathbaum, Schneider,
Flint-16-Geo. Fox-17-Lois Sackie





1-Sam Gill, Ed Nierniec-2-Wm. welling-1994-3-Searfoss, Gill
4-Stahl, Gill-5-Dill, Jarman, 1995-6-Schneider-7-Pecia from
hospitality room-8-Barb Bileland, Geo. Fox, Melba Cyphers,
Bickey Fox-9-Bourque, Jordan, Waltrip-10-Bourque, Searfoss
11-Waltrip-12-Cavallo, Murphy, Dot Murphy-13-Elsie and Ken
Risedorf-14-Jo Jordan-15-Jordan, Creathbaum, Schneider,
Flint-16-Geo. Fox-17-Lois Sackis

