

**16TH
BOMB
GROUP**

16th Bombardment Group (VH)

Commanders

Capt William W. Hosler, Jr.	June 1944
Maj Richard W. Lavin.	June 1944
Col Samuel C. Gurney, Jr.	11 July 1944-11 July 1945
Lt Col Andre F. Castellotti	11 July 1945 to deactivation



Col. Samuel C. Gurney, Jr.

Deputy Commanders

Lt Col Andre F. Castellotti	11 July 1944 to 11 July 1945
Lt. Col Collier H. Davidson	18 July 1945 to 13 October 1945
Lt. Col Richard W. Kline	13 October 1945 to deactivation

Operations Officers

Major Robert L. Jones	14 June 1945 to 25 June 1945
Lt Col Collier H. Davidson	25 June to 17 July 1945
Major Zed S. Smith	17 July 1945 to 28 August 1945
Major John S. Gillespie	28 August 1945 to deactivation

Data

Activated: April 1944
U.S. Training Base: Fairmont, Nebraska
Deployed to Guam:
 Ground Echelon - March 4, 1945
 (arrived Guam April 14, 1945 on USS Exchange)
 Air Echelon - April/May 1945

Squadrons

15th Bombardment Squadron, 16th Bombardment Group

Commanding Officers

Lt Col Richard W. Kline	.27 May 1945 to 12 October 1945
Major William N. Hensley	12 October 1945 to 5 November 1945
Captain Harold W. Wynn	5 November 1945 to 26 November 1945
Captain James Richardson	26 November 1945 to 28 November 1945
1st Lt Norman F. Holland	28 November 1945 to deactivation

Operations Officers

Major Charles F. Rogers	13 June 1945 to 8 September 1945
Major Bernard J. Malley	8 September 1945 to 5 November 1945
1st Lt William R. O'Neill	5 November 1945 to 28 November 1945
1st Lt Marcus T. Zambounis	28 November 1945 to deactivation

16th Bombardment Squadron, 16th Bombardment Group

Commanding Officers

Lt Col Coleman Stripling	8 August 1945 to 4 December 1945
1st Lt Clifford A. Wiggers	5 December 1945 to deactivation

Operations Officers

Major William N. Hensley	15 June 1945 to 28 July 1945
Major Sam A. Roberts	29 July 1945 to 22 September 1945
Capt Clarence W. Maurer	22 September 1945 to 27 November 1945
1st Lt Warren H. Baird	27 November 1945 to deactivation

17th Bombardment Squadron, 16th Bombardment Group

Commanding Officers

Lt Col Collier H. Davidson	18 June 1945 to 25 June 1945
Major Richard W. Lavin	25 June 1945 to 5 October 1945
Major William Shmock	5 October 1945 to 21 November 1945
1st Lt Willis H. Southerland	21 November 1945 to deactivation

Operations Officers

Major William Shmock	21 June 1945 to 5 October 1945
Major Jean W. Spears	5 October 1945 to 15 October 1945
1st Lt Clifford A. Wiggers	15 October 1945 to 3 December 1945
1st Lt Seymour Fleisher	3 December 1945 to deactivation

16TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (VH)

We were born at a place called Dalhart, Texas, where the highway widened a little bit. Our exact birth place was East Field where there was a school building, a theatre, some barracks, three hangars, a runway, a control tower and a Piper Cub. But we had plenty to do to pass the time. We could eat in the La Vona or the Texas Cafe, catch a movie, dance in the Trianon, and take in another movie. And for the boys who liked a little spice in life, Clayton, N.M. was only 50 miles away. We did "get acquainted" at Dalhart and that was just about all. On July 31, the Air Echelon left for Orlando, Florida, and on August 15, the Ground Echelon went to Fairmont, Nebraska. We left East Field flat - very flat - with the solemn (but broken) vow that we would never again complain of monotony.

We had to toughen up, the book said in large print. And Raton, N.M. is where the toughening up process took place. Toward the end of August we moved out to the bivouac area in Raton — a squadron at a time. We met the engineers (a little careless with their dynamite but otherwise O.K.) and we almost met every insect, snake and lizard in the state of New Mexico. For diversion we ducked live slugs on the infiltration course, walked through gas just to prove that our masks worked, and hiked around (but NOT to look at scenery). The last night was a real thriller-diller. Until dark, we made faces at each other from either bank of a gully. Then somebody fired a flare and we mixed it up a bit. At midnight somebody called off the war but a few carried on a personal war until late in the morning. Dalhart looked just a little better after Raton.

It may have sounded like a name of a patented breakfast cereal but at FAAF we found a home away from home. The Fairmont Army Air Field was far from elaborate and Fairmont itself was not a metropolis, but who could forget that fabulous city of Omaha — Bagdad on the Missouri River.

To the 16th Group, FAAF will always conjure up such names as "The Cave under the Hill" the "Fontenelle", the "Music Box", and last but not least the "White Horse". The great exodus started on Saturday and on Monday we would be back at the field, our hearts just a little warmer with fond memories.

Sometimes it was hard to remember the serious business which brought us to Fairmont. But we were there for work and we worked hard. Ask any line man shivering from the sub-zero winds sweeping across the flat plains of Nebraska while he was trying to work on a B-29. That weather finally proved to be our undoing. It was almost impossible to fly in Nebraska in the winter. We could conduct ground school, set up our administrative organization and train maintenance men; but we were lucky if we

could get five planes in the air for two hours in any one day.

And so it was decided that the Flight Echelon would have to set up an advanced base in a warmer clime. They found that warmer clime in....But that is part of another story.

It just couldn't happen to us, but it did! Uncle Sam actually paid our expenses for a trip to the land of "Rum and Coca-Cola" and he picked the best time of the year for it — January, February and March. The War Department called us "The Gypsy Task Force" and they meant it. Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico was the ideal spot for a Gypsy. Swimming pools, a golf course and soft, tropical breezes that were a far cry from the sub-zero blasts that were hitting FAAF. It was a charming, delightful, lazy land where the natives spoke in their liquid patois: "Bay-cone-aigs-ovair". Some linguists picked up enough language to do quite well in San Juan — especially on Skid Row. We were down there for training in "long range, over water navigation" but we couldn't pass up a bit of night flying too. You never could tell when the experience might come in handy. The "Castle Inn" was ideal for this part of the training program. One of our crews, forced to land a bit off the beaten path, located the "Exhibicion". (Exact location will be given for a slight fee upon inquiry at the main office.) And for a really good story ask some of the boys about the Republic where it cost less to kill a man than to pick him up and take him to a hospital if you hit him with an automobile. Of course, it was a bit hectic. The standard questions was: "Where are our wandering boys tonight?" But all in all, it was mighty pleasant to be a Gypsy on the Spanish Main. Sherman might have revised his opinion if he had trained in Puerto Rico.

It was raining when we hit Seattle and it was raining when we left. In between we dodged the rain drops at Fort Lawton where we scrambled through the 100 yard dash for the medics, scrambled down the landing nets, scrambled through our last stateside city in a feverish search for excitement and finally scrambled on board the S.S. Exchange. It was Saint Patrick's day when we pulled out and Fort Lawton band was playing "The Wearing of the Green". The ship had started to rock and some of the men were green already. It didn't take too long to learn a secondary use for a helmet. We pulled into Pearl Harbor on Palm Sunday with visions of tropical scented romance on the beach at Waikiki in our minds. We got a berth in the middle of the harbor where the tropical scent of the garbage scow was wafted in our direction once a day. But there was romance in the form of a troop of Hula girls. (Maybe they were from Minsky's, but who cared?) Eniwetok was next — a nightmare of glaring sun and coral. Even the sand crabs were tired of the place and had put in for rotation. We heaved a sigh of relief when the Exchange pulled out of the lagoon and headed west. Three days later we saw our future home rising out of the Pacific. We were on Guam and our journey was at an end.

From FAAF they went to Herrington where the Flight

From FAAF they went to Herrington where the Flight Echelon ran into the most efficient processing set up in the army. It was so good that if you didn't have an answer to a question the processing section supplied it for you. Group Headquarters were promptly set up in Room 1025 in the Muelhach Hotel, Kansas City, but a few reconnaissance parties were sent to Wichita and returned with glowing reports. Sacramento was an anti-climax after Herrington. It was merely the place of six alerts a day until take-off time. The Flight Echelon followed a route from Sacramento to Oahu to Kwajalein to Guam. The balance of the Air Echelon followed an even more glamorous route. From FAAF they travelled direct to Hamilton Field, California, 28 miles from the Golden Gate. The United Nations delegates were meeting and San Francisco was a carnival town in full splendor. Chinese Admirals, South American Generals and Arab princes strolled casually through the streets — a few men in the Group managed to get rides in diplomatic Packards. But the standard attractions were not forgotten. The Air Corps entered into spirited competition with the Navy on Market Street and Chinatown received a full play. Fisherman's Wharf, the Mural Room, the Persian Room, Finnochio's, and the Top of the Mark were SOP. It was with a sigh of regret that the Air Echelon stepped into ATC planes and took off for Oahu, Johnston Island, Kwajalein and finally Guam.

The Ground Echelon hit Northwest Field in April and found that a bulldozer had cleared a space and the engineers had obligingly blasted two latrines out of solid coral. The advanced party — mostly "chair corps" troops — set to work at once and dug, drilled, hammered, shoveled, hacked and blasted out of the jungle something that looked like an air base. They slept on the ground and ate cold C-rations (meat and beans or beans and meat) and cursed the pungent odor of the new latrines. The never ending battle with the rats began on the first night. The pitter patter of little feet did not herald the Children's Hour but was a call to battle with Mickey Mouse's rugged, tropical cousin. But things gradually shaped up and when the Air Echelon arrived, there were prefabricated barracks, a "Theatre under the Stars," a Field Exchange, shower baths, the beginning of Quonset huts and a mess hall. On the 27th of May our first fly-aways came in carrying Col. Gurney and a few key officers. The following day the first ATC passengers arrived and then the trickle became a steady stream. The "hardened veterans" of the Ground Echelon saw to it that the newcomers received a Bunyanesque version of life on Guam, including a few tall tales about Japs, lizards, and rats. But everyone survived, and by June 20th all except a few crews were at Northwest Field. The 16th Group was ready to go into action.

Preston Crans

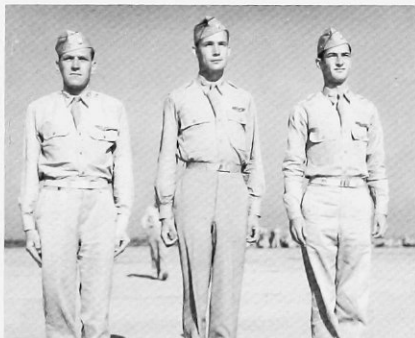
16th Bombardment Group



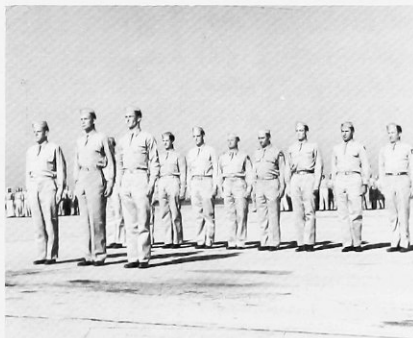
Lt Col Coleman Stripling



Staff of 16th Bomb Group
 (Top) Capt's Meagher, Hymanson, Rittenhouse, Williams, Reedy, Tornwall, Redfield, Flury, Parker and MacLaughlin
 (2nd) Major's Israel, Goetzke, and Shmock, Lt Col's Hopsak, Castellotti and Davidson, Major's Gillespie, Ammerman, Goodhart, Malbin and Walker
 (Bottom) Major Hosler, Capt Dowd, Capt Rees, W/O Cycon, Capt Novak, Lt Wenzel, Lt King, Capt Patton, Capt Gannon, and Ch Zimmerman



Squadron Commanders
 (l-r) Donaldson, Stripling, Garland



Squadron Officers



Major Howards Ground Crew



Section B, Scheduled Inspection Crew No. 4
 M/Sgt Crist NCOIC

16th Bomb Group



Alan Eckhart



(Top) James Koontz, John Ward
(Bottom) Chet Majeski,
Dunbar Vanderveer



Chet Majeski



John Reid



Alan Eckhart congratulates Lee
Nelson on the arrival of twin sons.



Seamal (USN), John Kechele



Lee Nelson

Ground Crews 16th Bomb Group

