

The Collierville Herald Thursday September 12, 1991 Page

Clark Porteous Notes

Collierville Man Flew B-29s in WW II, Writes Books

Little did I know about Chester Marshall when he was a chief proof reader and I was a reporter for the Memphis Press-Scimitar.

Marshall, now a Collierville resident, was a B-29 Superfortress pilot who flew 30 missions against the Japanese in World War II.

Since his retirement in 1979, Marshall has been writing books.

His first book was "Sky Giants over Japan, a Diary of a B-29 Combat Crew in WWII."

Four-Star Gen. Curtis LeMay, who died last year, helped Marshall with his books and wrote in his first book "I would send a copy to the Commanding General of the Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala. It should be required reading for all students."

Marshall flew from Saipan, a 3000 mile round trip over the ocean, to Tokyo, and participated in the first B-29 raid on Tokyo Nov. 24, 1944. He said "it was the first bombing of Tokyo since Jimmie Doolittle flew a raid off the aircraft carrier Hornet two years before."

Marshall piloted three different B-29s to make 30 missions. The first was blown up by Japanese bombers from Iwo Jima while on the ground at Saipan. The second was downed over Japan while being flown by a new crew and only five of the 11-man crew survived the war as Japanese prisoners of war.

The third B-29 was named Mary Ann for the baby of Marshall's crew chief.

The first 10 missions were dangerous, and we into plenty of anti-aircraft and fighter

planes," Marshall said. "But we kept knocking out their oil supplies and their planes had to stay on the ground, and we had less resistance the final 20 missions."

Marshall's group participated in the bombing of Kyushu, where Kamikaze pilots were being trained.

A native of Holmes County, Miss., Marshall graduated from high school in Belzoni, where he ran the mile on the track team and played football. He attended Bowling Green Business University for two years, quitting to volunteer as a private for the Army Air Corps. Marshall entered the Aviation Cadet program in 1942 and trained in Texas. He received a second lieutenant's commission and pilot wings. He was one of 12 in a graduating class of more than 200 selected for secret training which turned out to be flying B-29s. He was promoted to first lieutenant while flying missions and remained in the reserves for 10 years.

After his discharge in October, 1945, he returned to Mississippi and the newspaper business. He had worked during summers and holidays for the Belzoni Banner, a weekly, and returned to that paper, saying, "I worked from the ground up, getting stories, editing, selling ads and doing make-up." He edited the Quitman County Democrat in Marks and worked for the Clarksdale Register, then was sports editor of the Greenwood Star, then was with the Holmes County Herald. In 1960, he moved to Memphis and worked for S.C. Toof.

Marshall worked as proof reader for The Press-Scimitar for 12 years, the last eight as chief proof reader. He remembers Van Pritchardt, now editor and publisher of The Herald, as managing editor of The Press-Scimitar frequently coming to the proof room.

Marshall has been married to the former Lois Groves for 40 years. She is from Inverness, Miss. They met in Belzoni where she was a clerk for the Illinois Central, when he was in a car with two couples going to a bingo game at Four Mile Lake. One of the others saw Lois and asked her to join them, and the romance started. They have three children; Dennis, a Memphis businessman; Darryl of Collierville, head football coach at Briarcrest, and Debra Marshall, who lives with her parents at 895 Quail Chase and works for Morgan-Keegan in Memphis, a 40-minute drive. They have two



Chester Marshall with books he has written or helped with.

grandchildren, Amber, 11 and Aaron, 9, who attend Briarcrest, where their mother teaches and father coaches.

When "Sky Giants" was published in 1984, there was a newspaper article and Sture B. Pierson of Memphis, who was a radar officer on B-29s in WWII, called Marshall. This led to an informal club, Memphis Area WWII B-29 Flyer Club, which meets for lunch the fourth Thursday every month at Anderton's Restaurant in Memphis. The club has 22 members, including Jack French, 227 Valleywood Dr., in Collierville, who was a pilot. Marshall is chairman. The club will meet for a night dinner Sept. 26 with wives, but generally meets for lunch.

In addition to "Sky Giants," Marshall has written three editions of "The Global Twentieth, an Anthology of the 20th AF in WWII." He has the fourth edition nearly ready, writing it on a computer. He also plans to do a book on the Bataan Avenger, a "war weary" B-29 he flew home with a composite

All images on this document are files of the Center for the Study of Tennesseans and War -
the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS**

MEMORANDUM

Sept. 23, 1991

FROM THE DESK OF ...

Commissioner Bill Manning

Dear Dr. Johnson:

My secretary found the enclosed article on Chester Marshall in the Collierville newspaper and thought you might find it useful in your collection of WW II memorabilia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bill", with a horizontal line drawn underneath it.

Commissioner Manning

All images on this document are files of the Center for the Study of Tennesseans and War -
the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

November 1, 1991

Mr. Bill Manning, Commissioner
Department of Veterans' Affairs
215 Eighth Avenue, North
Nashville, TN 37203

Dear Bill:

Thank you very much for your note of 23 September. I really appreciate your sending along the article on Chester Marshall. We contacted Marshall about a year ago and he donated copies of his books to our Project.

Hope to see you at the World War II Exhibit Reception in Nashville.

Sincerely,

Dr. Charles W. Johnson, Director
Center for the Study of War and Society.