

## Did You Know...

# First Epic Flight over Hurricane flew from Morrison Field



Crew of the B-29 Hurricane Observation Flight October 7, 1946: Rear, left to right, Captain Alvin K. Funderborg, radar operator; Captain Homer E. Brown, navigator; First Lieutenant William B. Tyler, co-pilot; Major Paul H. Fackler, pilot; First Lieutenant John Andrews, engineer; Art Keil, civilian, West Palm Beach City Publicity Director; and John J. Borton, civilian photographer. Front row, left to right; First Lieutenant Richard W. Comer, Public Relations Officer; Captain Arnold A. McCarley, Weather Observer; Second Lieutenant Jack Williams, Army photographer; Tech Sergeant R.L. Campbell, scanner; Tech Sergeant Jack C. Ray, Radio Operator; First Lieutenant W.D. Kelly, scanner. Courtesy Historical Society of Palm Beach County.

On October 7, 1946, Major Paul H. Fackler successfully piloted the first B-29 airplane over a hurricane. The reconnaissance aircraft was assigned to the 55<sup>th</sup> Squadron, 1<sup>st</sup> Weather Group, Morrison Field, West Palm Beach. The flight encountered the hurricane 75 miles off the Florida coast, climbing to 31,000 feet to fly over the storm. The flight spent three hours over the hurricane before continuing on to Guatemala City, Guatemala. The highest recorded winds were 104 miles per hour, while the average winds were 100 miles per hour. During the hurricane fly-over, the crew made an important discovery when the radar picked up the eye of the hurricane. After the crew returned to Morrison Field, Fackler reported that they did not encounter turbulence in the center of the hurricane even though they ran into 100 mile an hour winds.