

THREE MONTHS FOR THE LAST TWO AND A HALF YEARS. Fighting the war was hard enough, but to have to tear down and build up, then tear down again was more than arduous. The camp had lights that were the envy of Clark Field. This was a coup of Major Pressley McInnis, Communications Mogul. How he got hold of such treasures as generators and transformers was never revealed, but our commanding officer supplied him with 2 cases of real Scotch whiskey. EM Clubs, NCO Clubs and Officers Clubs sprang up. There was beer - not enough but good, and there was plenty of coke. The whiskey was terrible and bad for you, but the Quartermaster did issue, at a great price, a drink that passed as whiskey and would not hurt the consumer other than give him a thick head. In short, life was good. Smiling Filipino children canvassed for laundry and even returned most of it. Watermelons were for sale at the front gate, that had to be set up to keep the local population at bay. Years of shortages had made many of them too light fingered. Still operations had to go on despite the comforts of the flesh.

An extra burden was heaped upon our Commanding Officer, Col. Pettus, as he was made commander of Clark Field. It was the policy of the 5<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force that the senior tactical officer present on an airdrome would be the airdrome commander. This was not a good system as the C.O. of a tactical unit had plenty of work to do aside from the problems of the airstrip. At Tacloban, where he was also commander, the unit was operating at a greatly reduced capacity, and there were lots of men he could use to help. At Clark the 43<sup>rd</sup> was operating all out and even though there were service squadrons to run the housekeeping chores, decisions had to be made. There were Army, Navy, Marines, hundreds of planes, dozens of units all wanting better parking areas, priorities, etc. There was even a squadron of Mexican Air Force flying P-47s. It was a thankless job to be C.O. as you could not please everybody. Sad to say when KEN'S MEN moved to Ie Shima, he was C.O. again.

May 31-Jun 1, 1945. At 0220 on June 1<sup>st</sup> a 64<sup>th</sup> plane started the month with an H2X/visual on a Canton target. The load was 8 X 500 lb. incendiaries and 3 fires were stated that were still burning as the plane left the area 30 minutes later. Searchlights were around but there was no AA although rope was used and leaflets were dropped. A convoy of possibly 20 ships had been reported and sighted on radar on May 30<sup>th</sup>. It was to look for this prize that 6 Sea Hawks took to the air to begin the month. Four were carrying 3500 gallons of fuel and the other two were carrying 3100 gallons each. If no convoy was found, the first 4 were to go to Shanghai. Lt Wilson, of recent hard luck, found no convoy, so he headed to the delta in search for ships where he found a Fox Tare Charlie. Two LAB runs were well off and bombardier F/O Blackett feared there was an internal problem and suggested they try a skip bomb run. The Fox Tare Charlie had been throwing up a hail of AA and this next run would be no exception. Despite spraying the ship from the plane's forward guns, the flak persisted. As the plane passed over, the crew saw two 500s make contact. At same instant the B-24 was rocked when the tail turret was hit by a 20mm. S/Sgt. Elmer French was seriously wounded in both arms and his back. The plane also received numerous holes, so #898 turned and headed for home. Sgt. French was bandaged up and made as comfortable as possible for the 7 plus hour return flight to Clark. This was that crew's fifth sinking. Lt. Scroggs went to Shanghai, made a run on a destroyer and was shot up for his efforts. On a second run, an enemy hit in the hydraulics caused his bombs not to release so he headed for home after levering the bombs out. The third plane had radar trouble and turned back.

Lastly, Lt. Dolley reached the Yangtze, sank a stationary patrol craft, and then went after a large tug with his last bomb that resulted in a near miss. His crew then strafed the tug. Although the tug seemed to be low in the water, it could only be claimed as damaged. The short range searchers found nothing. One plane turned back with a gas leak and Lt. Patton made a day light run over Mako, the secondary, and was seriously shot up. A direct hit from 20mm destroyed the nose turret and killed the gunner, probably S/Sgt. Leonard L. Brown. (The Group casualty list has him as injured in action.) The 63<sup>rd</sup> had added 4300 tons to shipping sunk, but at a price.

June 1, 1945. AA was again the target at Takao for the Group strike. The technique was different this time in that the planes would bomb individually. They were to approach the target by elements but then each plane in the element would take a gun position in a battery as its aiming point. Half the elements would run east to west, and the other half would run from west to east. As soon as the AA suppression units had bombed, the 3 other heavy B-24 Groups were to hit their Takao targets. For better accuracy the altitude was down to 11,000'. Twenty-one planes took off and 19 bombed Takao. Strangely, no AA was received from the batteries that were being attacked; they did not fire. AA was received from nearby Toshien and Heito whose guns could reach the approach corridor to Takao. Four planes were holed. Hits were claimed on at least 7 or more gun pits of the 6 batteries attacked. Smoke and dust were problems for the second elements. Even bombs that did not hit the aiming point were not wasted as the whole area was surrounded by military encampments or industrial targets. Later raids on Takao proved that these raids had been successful in reducing flak over this once "hot" target. Hardly a shot was fired even though bomb coverage had not been total.

Four 63<sup>rd</sup>s were out this night and into June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Three went to Shanghai near the mouth of the Yangtze and one went to Hong Kong. Of the 3 that went to Shanghai, 2 attacked the same Fox Tare Charlie. First, Lt. Orton and crew had a go and missed with 4 bombs. Then Lt. Fullenwider missed on a skip bombing run, but on a second try scored a hit using LAB. The ship was seen listing 30 degrees, but they could not wait to see if it sank as their fuel was getting low. So a "damaged" was all they were credited with - 3500 tons.

The third plane had electrical problems and dropped its bombs 500 yards off a Fox Tare Charlie. The Hong Kong plane found nothing and could not reach its secondary near Canton due to a fuel problem.

A 65<sup>th</sup> H2X plane started June 2<sup>nd</sup> off with an attack on Kiirun Town. This was to be a warm up of the daylight raid by the strike squadrons. At 2256 hours from 10,000 feet 12 X 500 lb. incendiaries were dropped and they started several fires that were visible 20 miles away.

June 2, 1945. The daylight raid to Kiirun did not get there due to bad weather, so they bombed Takao to try out the AA after the previous day's raid. There was little flak from the target; only one plane was holed. Bombing was fair as the 403<sup>rd</sup> got zero for the day - all in the water or on a sand bar. One huge explosion with smoke to 1500' was heard as the group pulled away. Leaflets were dropped and rope was used. Photos the next day showed numerous buildings destroyed as well as damage to the shipyards where many small craft, i.e. barges, luggers, a dredge and some Sugar Dogs were blown up. It had been a tough two nights at the mouth of the Yangtze so on the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> three more planes went back there. They had no luck with ships. Lt. Orton tried for a Sugar Dog

and later bombed a reef. Lt. Scroggs found no ships and settled for Woosung Cotton Mills and a third plane did not make the search area, but due to radar problems went to Mako.

A fourth plane out that night was an anti-radar ferret to Nanking. Radar failure made him turn back after 40% of the mission was completed, but the crew's excitement was not over as Clark Field was closed in, and the plane had to go all the way back to Laoag, an emergency field for night operations, where it made a night landing. The plane returned to Clark the next day.

A 403<sup>rd</sup> H2X plane hit Kiirun Town at 0135 on June 3<sup>rd</sup> with 12 X 500 lb. incendiaries that started good fires. The run was made on H2X, but just before the plane reached the target, there was a break in the weather and a visual rate was established. Rockets were fired at this plane from an unknown source, but they failed to reach the altitude of the B-24. Upon returning to Clark they could not land due to ground fog, so they landed at Porac strip, south of Clark, and returned later that morning.

June 3, 1945. The primary target for the day was to be the power stations, Jitsugetsu-tan, on Formosa. This vital spot had been hit before, but it was now producing up to 60% power on line. The weather turned out to be too bad for this strike, so the squadrons went to Takao again doing more damage and seeing very little AA. The 403<sup>rd</sup> had all kinds of problems and dropped bombs in the water and everywhere except the target (but near to it).

Unfortunately, a 65<sup>th</sup> plane [#980] on takeoff and beginning to assemble crashed into Mt. Arayat that was NNW of Clark Field. The normal procedure was to make a 180 degree turn after takeoff. Each following plane made a shorter turn with assembly taking place on the downwind leg. With another 180 degree turn the squadron would be brought together and heading up the valley towards Lingayen Gulf. On this day Mt. Arayat was partially shrouded in clouds with the peak projecting above the clouds. Pilot, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Frank L. Chisman apparently flew to the prescribed assembly that sadly took him into the clouds and disaster. Clouds covering Mt. Arayat were a common occurrence and the 180 degree turn was to be taken sooner to keep out of the mist. [It was not known for some time that the plane hit this mountain. Discovery of the remains took place after the group planes returned from the day's strike and #980 was missing. It is also the memory of Jim Cherkauer that on the days that Mt. Arayat was clouded over, we made our 180 degree turn in the opposite direction than was the usual case. This took the entire group away from the mountain, but it seems that Lt. Chisman did not follow this procedure.]

This night and into the next day, June 4<sup>th</sup>, the Sea Hawks went back to the Yangtze with 3 planes. Lt. Phillip was the only one to find a ship, a Fox Baker. He dropped 4 bombs getting 1 direct hit and a near miss. A flare showed the bow awash and the ship sinking. He then headed home. The second plane missed the Woosung Docks. That old vet Dolley found an apparition of 800 tons with center pagoda and a glass dome. Whatever it was, he bombed it by LAB but could report no damage. The Navy and V Bomber Command would be looking up what this might have been.

At 0345 that morning a 65<sup>th</sup> H2X hit Taihoku with 12 X 500 lb. incendiaries starting some fires that did not seem to spread. One night fighter caused trouble as it made 4 firing passes but scored no hits. The B-24 did not return fire and lost the night fighter using evasive action.

June 4, 1945. The 43<sup>rd</sup> was to join up with the 22<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group to hit Kaihoku [probably Taihoku] Town with 1000 lb. demos, but the target was hidden by thick clouds so it was back to Takao to hit the rail yards. The bombing was excellent with great damage inflicted and big fires started. There was no AA and the usual dropping of leaflets took place. Later photos showed extensive damage to a roundhouse and water towers. Many cars were destroyed and 15 direct hits were credited to KEN'S MEN. Those 1000 demos do the work.

This night and into the next morning 3 Sea Hawks were off to Shanghai and the delta. Lt. Croft found a Fox Tare Charlie, but failed to hit taking 4 LAB runs. A nearby frigate threw some 50 cal. that creased his plane. At this time 2 night fighters were circling and took some very long range pot shots at the B-24. The crew felt that they had enough excitement for one night, but with 1 bomb left, they flew over the Woosung Dock area and dropped it - a dud. So they took night photos and then headed home. Lt. Orton was only 25% of the way to the target when he lost his #3 engine and jettisoned all bombs and ammo, but he still had about 2500 gallons of fuel. Lt. Canevari missed a Fox Tare Charlie due to radar malfunction and was very cross indeed. Once again, the anti-radar ferret to Nanking was a bust after about 40% of the mission was completed when the radar went out so they returned home.

Early this same morning a 64<sup>th</sup> unarmed daylight recco did about 75% of its assigned track of South China Sea via the Pescadores. They found an impenetrable front off Amoy.

June 5, 1945. The strike squadrons were to hit Taichu Drome aircraft on the ground. This was to help counter the Kamikaze problem that was getting severe around Okinawa. The Empire's secret weapon, the weather, prevented any of the 43<sup>rd</sup>'s 17 planes that reached central Formosa from hitting the primary. The targets of opportunity, named secondaries, were either socked in so bad as to make it dangerous for so many B-24s to be barging around in the clouds. The load was frags and they were well scattered. The rule was BOMB WHAT YOU CAN SEE as there were B-25s also in the area and on the deck. The 65<sup>th</sup> was on a run on Takao and were told to pull off and bomb separately where they could visually see the run up. Taito got the most attention from the 403<sup>rd</sup> and the other groups. Numerous fires were started, but damage assessment was very difficult. Enemy fighters were sighted by several squadrons, but they did not press attacks even on single planes. Orders were "If alone and you see an enemy fighter that even hints that it is going to make a pass, give him a squirt." KEN'S MEN were loading extra tracers in some guns, i.e. 1 in 3 instead of 1 in 5. A tracer shell looks as big as a bowling ball and timid pilots often stay away when they realize that the quarry they are tracking is watching. Tracer ammunition is very erratic in flight and the other shots in a burst do not necessarily follow the same path. AA holed about 4 planes, but it was hard to say where some of it was coming from. One large explosion was reported in Taito Town. The Sea Hawks made the long grind to Shanghai again this night and next morning. Lt. Phillips spotted a juicy big ship out of the blind bomb zone and asked for permission to attack. The answer was negative, so he headed to the Yangtze's mouth where they attacked a good radar return and missed with 3 bombs. A flare showed it to be a hulk already on the bottom. The last 2 bombs were dropped on a U/I ship, but the results were unobserved. Lt. Seaman was next into the breach and he too was suckered into bombing a good radar return that was a reef. Chagrined, but not discouraged, they dropped a single bomb on a Fox Tare Charlie, hit it at the water line, and it sank after a big

explosion. Another Fox Tare Charlie was nearby, and it received a treatment of a 500 lb. Torpex and gave forth a big explosion. This was their last bomb and fuel did not allow them to remain and confirm the sinking - it was claimed probably sunk. Two hits with 2 bombs. Last off was Lt. Moore, and he to bombed a hulk and found no other shipping. He also bombed a land target and started a small fire. Night fighters were seen, but they made no attempt to close.

June 6, 1945. At 0800 an unarmed 64<sup>th</sup> weather recco took off on the long haul of the South China Sea to Wenchow. It returned at 1900 hours.

There was no group strike this day.

Again 3 Sea Hawks were off to the Yangtze delta and Shanghai this night and into the morning of the 7<sup>th</sup>. This was the beginning of a 2-week dry spell for the 63<sup>rd</sup> as far as shipping was concerned. The distance to the search was some [1]200 miles, which was over 14 hours transit time. This left 2 hours or so for the planes to hunt in the area or find the secondary land target, drop their bombs and then head for home. The planes carried 3500 gallons of fuel, enough for 20 hours plus in the air. The bomb loads were 2000 pounders, either 4 X 500 lb or drop off a 500 and add 2 X 250s - Torpex was the rule. It was long, tiring and dangerous work.

All the planes hit the Woosung Docks with varying results. Some buildings were destroyed and some fires were started, but the returns were small when compared to sinking a ship. The odds were that a ship contained vital war materials, either going or coming, or was the vehicle for the trans-shipment for the same. A warehouse might be full or empty, and even if full, it might have little effect on the Empire's war effort. An attempt was made to photograph hulks so they could be more easily identified, but the glare on the water destroyed the image.

June 7, 1945. Again there was no group strike.

A 65<sup>th</sup> H2X plane went to Taihoku for what usually was a routine drop from 10,000'. The run was at 0050 the morning of the 8<sup>th</sup>. The AA generally was inaccurate, but 1 fragment punctured an oil tank. As the plane broke away, searchlights and 5 night fighters picked them up. Passes by the fighters were eager and as close at 20'. MG and cannon fire knocked out the #1 engine and shot out the left tire. The attackers had their landing lights on and these partially blinded the B-24's gunners at critical times. The attacked plane soon found clouds for coverage. The crew congratulated itself that no one was wounded and so headed home. They nursed #1 back to life for a while, but it quit north of Lingayen. They decided to land at the big 10,000' long runway at Lingayen rather than come down the valley with dicey weather caused by ground fog. One landing gear collapsed and the plane was a salvage job, but nobody was injured in landing. The B-24 was an unforgiving plane on any emergency landing on land or water. There were long arguments as to what was best to do when 1 tire was flat. Should you shoot out the other tire or try holding the wing up as long as possible, even allowing a turning into the flat tire to put the stress on the good wheel and at the same time use parachutes to slow down while not using brakes on the side with the flat tire. This discussion never was settled, but all agreed that it was important to see that everybody was in his crash position on landing.

The word from the weather people was that a big front had descended on Luzon and the Formosa Strait so planes might not be flying for several days except for the Sea Hawks who flew in all weather.

The night of June 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> a maximum effort was called for to search the delta to see if the Japanese had found an alternate method to enter and leave the Shanghai/Yangtze complex. Although 4 Sea Hawks planes were on this search, only a lugger was found and it was missed. Nothing was found to indicate that the Japanese had found an alternate route. One of the B-24s turned back after experiencing a fuel problem. The 403<sup>rd</sup> sent a weather recco to the China coast north to Wenchow. These reccos carried no bombs so there would be no temptation to attack if they saw a convoy. They were to report it and stay in the area for further instructions. This B-24 was shadowed for 40 minutes by an enemy fighter who made what appeared to be a pass one time while the B-24 sent some tracers in his direction. The weather was so bad that of the 12½ hours of flying time, 6 were on instruments.

Jun 8, 1945. [There is no mention in Jim Pettus' manuscript of what took place with the 3 strike squadrons this day.]

On the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> the 63<sup>rd</sup> was again in the Yangtze/Hangchow Bay area to look for ships, but only some luggers were sighted. The planes bombed the Woosung Docks, the rail yards and warehouses. There were few lights and little AA. One plane had to jettison its bombs after the crew spent 40 minutes trying to fix the jammed bomb bay doors. For that crew it was a long trip in vain.

Jun 9, 1945. Rain saturated Clark Field so there were no daylight strikes this day.

The Sea Hawks could not fly either and had the night off. Those 15 hour missions to Shanghai were hard on both men and planes.

Jun 10, 1945. The entire area was closed again. The 403<sup>rd</sup> was called on to do an armed weather recco. The plane was to dump its bombs on the Pescadores on the return flight. The crew spent 8 of the 12-hour mission flying on instruments. They found only a few open spots along the China coast. A Tojo made 1 pass firing a burst and received several in return. The bombs were dropped on a village in the Pescadores when the crew luckily found a break in the clouds. The B-24 ROned at Laoag due to a fuel shortage and bad weather at Clark Field. These long reccos were hard on the turret gunners as the guns had to be manned at all times when there was a danger of interception. Nose and tail turrets were very cramped. They leaked and were cold so gunners had to be spelled off from time to time. The waist gunners would change places with them. The engineer and radio operator were needed on or near the flight deck at all times.

This night, 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup>, two 63<sup>rd</sup> planes went to Shanghai, but 1 experienced IFF trouble soon after passing over Lingayen and had to turn back. Lt. Seaman, in #108, pressed on and found no ships so he went to the secondary target, Woosung Docks. The bombs would not release and by the time the crew discovered the problem they were near Kiang-Wan Drome, so they decided to pay this drome a call. Bombs were dropped, hitting the runway and dispersal areas. Photo flash pictures were taken, and upon examination later, the target turned out not to be Kiang-Wan, but instead a camouflaged uncharted air field 3 miles away. One comment from the crew was that, "The bomb run seemed very long."

Jun 11, 1945. The strike squadrons were again weathered in, but a 65<sup>th</sup> weather recco headed to the China coast to look for shipping that the B-25s and A-20s could eat up if they were within range. No ships were found, but at the secondary, Mako, a Sugar Able Sugar was

sighted tied up at a dock. The bombs fell long and no damage was done. The weather had improved at Mako - it was CAVU.

The night of the 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> was a bad one for the Sea Hawks as 2 of their planes went down. One plane was listed as MIA. It was #206 with one of the newer crews and piloted by Lt. Ray. The plane checked in at 0120 within the blind bombing zone with no indication of any problem. It was assumed the plane went down over the secondary target. (Pettus note says that this info is on pages 47/49 of the 3/7 cas. list.) [Chuck Rauch is in possession of a letter written on September 21, 1945, by Marvin K. Nester, one of 3 survivors of this crash. His aircraft position is unknown. To summarize briefly, he reports that at 0330 the plane was on a low altitude run to bomb a ship in the Yangtze River, but apparently due to some error, probably radar, the plane hit the water at a considerable speed. Three men survived. One, Lt. Redmon, probably not the pilot, was injured, and with the help of the Chinese farmers they were hidden from the Japanese and stayed in one of the farmer's homes for a time. Redmon was given good medical attention and care. Using many modes of transportation, including walking and riding in wheelbarrows, the Chinese managed to get them back to safety. This editor has asked that a copy of the letter be given to Ed Gammill for use in a future newsletter.]

The second plane, #809, was piloted by experienced Lt. Scroggs when he flew it into the blind bombing zone and found no ships to bomb. He then hit the Woosung Docks and headed for home, but a series of mistakes, misunderstandings and head winds brought them to a situation where it was impossible to make land. They had to ditch some 200 miles north of Luzon. Eleven men of the 12 aboard survived the ditching although 5 were seriously injured. One of the plane's 2 life rafts would not inflate, so all crowded together while Lt. Scroggs went back twice to the sinking plane to look for Sgt. Dickson who had not emerged. Just as #809 slipped under the waves, Lt. Scroggs swam back, but he had not found Dickson. As the crew was getting into the 1 life raft, engineer T/Sgt. Rickey floated away but was brought back by the tail gunner who knew Rickey could not swim. There were heartbreaking moments when the flares did not go off to attract passing planes. It was not until the evening of the second day that a B-17 "Jukebox" dropped them a boat with supplies, water and clothes. They now knew that they were saved.

It was very frustrating that they could not start the motor of the lifeboat, but they knew that help was on the way. The next morning a PBY dropped a note to say that a PT boat was on its way as the seas were too rough for the PBY to land. Fifty-four hours after ditching, they were in the PT boat and on their way to the PT base. The injured went to a hospital and 5 others were returned to duty after a few days. The reputation of the Rescue Service was highest in the eyes of KEN'S MEN.

Jun 12, 1945. A new tactic was used by the strike squadrons on the raid to bomb Hong Kong on this date. The load was 8 X 55 gallon drums of napalm to be dropped on concentrations of small ships and barges in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong. Our C.O. raised the question at the Bomber Command briefing as to why we would bomb small craft when many were fishing boats on which many families lived. This seemed contrary to the rule not to attack junks as they often helped downed airmen. The reply was that all persons resident on any boats would be told by authorities to leave the anchorage. There were 2 Japanese high speed wooden patrol boats amongst the fishing junks that would be targeted. The raid had the approval of Australian authorities who, with the British, coordinated targets

in the Crown Territory. After the briefing our C.O. told VBC Operations that those people would never leave their boats and a lot would be killed.

The raid was counted as a success. About half the barrels hit in the area and exploded (they had a different fuse for the water landing). Destroyed were a 50-foot tug, 12 cargo barges and 15 or more fishing boats (the high speed boats were untouched). AA was weak holding just 2 planes. One 403<sup>rd</sup> plane had a harrowing day when just after a dummy run on the target it lost the #3 engine. The pilot jettisoned and headed for home; 30 minutes later #2 engine began to lose oil and act up. The pilot kept it going as long as he could, maybe a bit too long. If oil pressure dropped below 45 p.s.i., the prop would not feather and in this case the prop ran away, the oil was gone and the engine eventually froze. On only 2 engines everything of any weight was thrown out, and with #1 and #4 pulling at nearly takeoff power, they made Lingayen and landed safely. This was a real sweat job and a lesson in watching oil pressure.

The Sea Hawks had a new chore on this date. They were track a typhoon, but they first had to find it. The route was to southern Luzon and then on to Leyte, Samar and back. No typhoon was found.

Only one 63<sup>rd</sup> plane went out to Shanghai the night of the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup>. The firebug of V Bomber Command gave orders that the load of 4 X 500 lb. incendiaries was to be dropped on ships or clusters of small boats if found. No targets were found. Visual bombing was impossible with a 300' ceiling. So they made an ETA run on a river boat and there was a nice glow in the clouds at 1500' as the bombs landed on shore (LAB could not be effectively used as they were too close to the shore). A large well lighted hospital ship was seen at 29°10'N - 12°35'E with red crosses on top and white crosses on the sides.

Jun 13, 1945. A 65<sup>th</sup> armed weather recco flew along the China coast with a secondary of Mako. Due to weather and a fuel shortage it did not hit Mako and dropped on a Sugar Charlie Sugar at Matshasha Island. All bombs missed and the ship was later deemed unserviceable anyway.

The daylight strike was to Takao Boat Basin and V Bomber Command's firebug ordered napalm loads. The weather was very poor and only the 65<sup>th</sup> made an H2X run with unobserved results. The 64<sup>th</sup> and 403<sup>rd</sup> turned to Taito Town, Formosa, and started numerous fires and explosions. AA at Taito was accurate and holed 3 planes in the 64<sup>th</sup>, wounding 2 men. There was a problem with the napalm drums in that they seemed to leak in rough air. Several were jettisoned for this reason. In all nineteen 43<sup>rd</sup> BG planes were over Formosa.

The 63<sup>rd</sup> ran into much the same weather over Shanghai this night. Two planes loaded with 4 X 500 lb. Torpex bombs crisscrossed the harbor, but the bombs were dropped in the vicinity of Woosung Cotton Mills. The results were unobserved due to clouds. A large fire, for which they could not claim credit, was burning near Chitung Town. This night the 403<sup>rd</sup> sent one H2X plane to Canton to the area where the elusive small arms factory was. They dropped 8 X 500 lb. incendiaries with only 1 bomb burst seen through the undercast. This was an H2X run and 4 bombs failed to release; they were later kicked out over water. Two night fighters were seen, but they were no problem.

Jun 14, 1945. There was no daylight strike this date.

One 65<sup>th</sup> plane went out to search for the ditched 63<sup>rd</sup> plane and found a grey boat with 7 occupants. The sail was up and 3 men waved. The plane left the area when it was



relieved by "Playmate 24." (This boat of survivors probably was not Scroggs and crew; it is not mentioned in either debrief that the 65<sup>th</sup> plane came over. Nor was there any mention of the Playmate on station over the boat. Also it is pretty close to the P.I. where it ditched. Still 7 men fit.) [Weren't there 11 men in the boat holding the 63rd crew survivors?] The bomber later strafed some boats described as 40' passenger boats lined along the shore at Ryuku Sho. None of the boats sank, but they were certainly leaking. (The boats strafed are not explained, but they might be boats that were taking Japs down to Luzon and/or bringing them out until air patrols got too fierce and the boats were abandoned.)

At 0155 on the 15<sup>th</sup> and H2X from the 64<sup>th</sup> had a hairy few minutes over Taihoku Town. Starting 30 miles out for the H2X run, they dropped rope on the way in but were caught in lights and by night fighters that fired and holed the stabilizer. AA was accurate and holed the plane twice on its last run. Violent evasive action shook off the night fighters and bomb bursts were observed through the undercast. Some small fires seemed to be started, but the crew did not stay around to see what was happening. They also dropped leaflets.

A single 63<sup>rd</sup> plane went back to the delta on the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup>. Finding nothing afloat, it lined up on the Woosung Cotton Mills. The ever trusty Canevari and crew laid their Torpex bombs through the undercast and hit something. A large explosion rocked the B-24 and a flash was visible through ground fog. The comment was "Whatever it was, it sure went off." (Dust and waste cotton by-products could be very explosive.)

Jun 15, 1945. The daylight strike was to Taichu, Formosa, with the objective being planes on the ground, of which there are few. The bomb load was 20 lb. frag clusters with each squadron given ONE plane each to destroy. The 64<sup>th</sup> blanketed their revetment but started no fires. The 403<sup>rd</sup> did the same with what was to be a twin-engine bomber in their revetment. Photos showed that the bird had flown before the bombing took place. The 65<sup>th</sup> missed altogether. [Jim Cherkauer led the second element and reported in his diary that their revetment was empty.] The AA was moderate and accurate holing 6 planes. One burst reported to have emitted shiny cables about 20' long with balls on the ends. Phosphorus shells were also seen. Leaflets were dropped. [Intelligence had told the 43<sup>rd</sup> before the mission that the 22<sup>nd</sup> BG would precede them to the target and knock out the AA.]

The 403<sup>rd</sup> sent an H2X to Wenchow for a weather recco and to hit the small boat harbor. Three stationary small boats were seen and 40 X 100 lb. demos were dropped sinking a Sugar Dog. Some bombs fell on the docks but the results were unobserved due to clouds. This B-24 developed an oil leak, landed at Laoag and returned to Clark the next day. This night and next morning the 63<sup>rd</sup> sent out only 1 plane to the Shanghai area, but again no ships were sighted. So it bombed the Shanghai Cotton Mills, but the bombs were well off the mark. There was no opposition by the enemy. On the return flight the plane detoured to investigate a stationary Sugar Able Sugar, but alas the plane had no bombs. In the wee hours of the next morning another 403<sup>rd</sup> bomber hit the Whampoa Docks at 0205 hours with 12 X 500 lb. demos on an H2X run. The return was excellent until a few seconds from "bombs away," but hits were thought to be made on or just beside the docks. AA was present with the plane being holed twice. Rope was used and leaflets were dropped. Night fighters trailed and made 1 firing pass causing no damage. One night fighter trailed the bomber for 2 hours.

An anti-radar ferret tried to make it to Nanking, but made it only 90% of the way due to headwinds and fuel shortage.

Jun 16, 1945. Nineteen 43<sup>rd</sup> bombers hit Kiirun Harbor with 600 bundles of 260 lb. frags. The bombing was good and there were numerous fires and explosions. The 22<sup>nd</sup> and 380<sup>th</sup> Groups also were present so even if some bombs were off one target they were into the next. Heavy smoke prevented accurate assessment of the bombing but wide spread damage was done. AA was heavy and accurate with 7 planes holed. One 64<sup>th</sup> took off late and bombed with the 22<sup>nd</sup> at Takao. This plane laid its bombs along the shore and peppered numerous barges starting fires and 1 large explosion. It too was holed. One 64<sup>th</sup> plane was listed with "major damage to the aircraft" due to a shot out hydraulic system and a dragging tail. Upon landing it skidded to a stop with no brakes. The 65<sup>th</sup> did an armed daylight weather recco to the South China Sea and Wenchow. It dropped 4 bombs on a three-mast junk and missed, but it then went to its primary target, Mako. Eight bombs fell on target but did not seem to do any damage to the underground oil storage facilities. The AA was medium causing one small hole in the stabilizer. A Dinah was seen passing within 150' of the plane, but it did not fire. The B-24 did fire a few rounds at the Dinah.

This night and into the next morning the 63<sup>rd</sup> had only 1 plane out. The pilot was the old Sea Hawk, maestro himself, Major Butts, who was going after the enemy at Shanghai. But the same fate awaited him; no ship was identified and 2 drops on radar targets produced only detonations.

This same night and morning the 65<sup>th</sup> had 1 H2X to Canton - Whampoa Docks. Bombing at 0055 from 10,600' with 12 X 500 lb. demos, they hit 200' north of the river and in the target. Night fighters intercepted the plane after the bombs were away. The fighter made several passes, but the B-24 took evasive action and did not return the fire. Leaflets were dropped, and both Macau and Hong Kong were lit up.

Jun 17, 1945. The 403<sup>rd</sup> sent an armed weather recco to the China Sea - Wenchow area and then back to Mako to bomb as it had found no ships in the first area. No shipping was sighted, so bombs were dropped on the graving docks and oil revetments. The fuel storage tanks were either empty or too well revetted since no fire was started. A lone Frank made a pass at the bomber as the bombs dropped. He fired but was too far away to do any damage, and tracers from the bomber kept him there.

The daylight strike was led by 3 H2X bombers. The target was an industrialized area of Kiirun. The 8 X 1000 lb. demos were well placed with 60% in the assigned target while those outside the area also started fires. In all 18 planes were over the target, but one had engine problems and had to jettison its bombs. Many fires and explosions were seen and heard. It seemed as though V Bomber Command had decided to turn this city into a rubbish dump. AA was heavy but meager with only 3 planes being holed.

This night and into the next morning 1 Sea Hawk went to Shanghai, but it found nothing but rain and more rain. Four bombs fell within the vicinity of the Cotton Mills, but no one was sure where.

Jun 18, 1945. The day began with a 65<sup>th</sup> plane at Taihoku at 0130 hours; it dropped 12 X 500 lb. incendiaries. These started fires the got bigger and then merged. Five night fighters met this lone B-24 and made several eager passes with much ammunition being exchanged. A new AA weapon was noted. It appeared as a biggish ball of blue/white fire spitting

fragments. It seemed to be on a parachute although none was seen despite the ball coming quite close to the bomber. The bomber dropped rope but the lights remained on except for a few seconds on the bomb run.

It was a maximum effort against Kiirun by the strike squadrons with their bombs being right on target. Numerous fires were seen with smoke rising to 8000' as the city suffered from the 1000 lb. demos dropped on it. One fighter made a daring pass [on the 65<sup>th</sup> #246 bomber in the lead element] but was greeted with lots of bullets from the top turrets. No damage resulted and he did not make another pass. AA was scattered and accurate with 5 planes being holed, but there were no injuries. A 403<sup>rd</sup> bomber had 2 bombs hang up, so it detoured by way of Kizan-to Island where they were dropped on some houses near a jetty with a large explosion being their reward. Smoke rose to 4500'.

A lone 63<sup>rd</sup> plane headed to Shanghai this night but turned back after 3 hours of flight due to the radar being out.

A lone 65<sup>th</sup> bomber on the night of the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> gave Taihoku a wake up call at 0402 with 12 X 500 lb. demos on an H2X run. This was to have been a fighter escorted mission, but the P-61 night fighter ran low on gas at Giran and had to head home. He missed greeting the 5 or 6 Japanese night fighters that attacked the B-24. They knocked out the #1 engine and put three 20mm holes in the stabilizer. Anti-fighter chaff did no good. There were phosphorus bombs dropped by the enemy. Ten to 20 blue searchlights were waving around without coordination. After the bomber left the target area, the waist and tail gun ammo was dumped to ease the weight. This flight seemed to have been over the target too late as it was getting light at that altitude, and the coordinated attacks looked like more aggressive enemy pilots were taking over. Much discussion was focused on why enemy planes often stayed so long with one of the night raiders but did not attack. But these fighters did not hang around. They made only one hard attack.

Jun 19, 1945. One 403<sup>rd</sup> bomber flew to Wenchow on an armed weather recco with shipping the hoped for target and the Mako ammo dump as the secondary. The weather was poor over the South China Sea and over the mainland for up to 40 miles inland. The flight went to the Pescadores and made several runs to put its load of 24 X 250 lb. demos on target using H2X due to the weather being 7/10 cumulus. The bombs fell in the west half of the target and destroyed at least 1 building. Two enemy fighters watched from a respectable distance.

This was the day the residential/commercial section of Kiirun was to catch it - and it did. Twenty 43<sup>rd</sup> planes went over the target and over 90% of their bombs were on the nose. There were always a few hang-ups or door problems, and this raid was no exception. The AA was accurate holing 5 planes with no injuries. There were lots of smoke and dust, but no major fires. Bombing was from 12,000' with a load of 1000 lb. instant fusing bombs - just the thing to blow up buildings.

The 63<sup>rd</sup> had a daylight weather recco to go south and look for a storm east of Samar. The storm area was located, but no effort was made to determine intensity. Typhoons move from south to north or northwest, and they didn't want one in the Philippines or Okinawa where there were hundreds of friendly ships offshore and not in protected anchorages.

Three Seahawks were out this night of the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup>; two to Shanghai with the same old story - no ships - hit the secondary. However, the secondary couldn't be seen due to fog and haze. Bombs were dropped, but how much good they did was questionable. Still the recco had to be done, for sooner or later shipping had to come back to the delta. The

third plane was the anti-radar ferret to Nanking, and this time it was 100% complete. Lt. Croft and crew won the prize. Two enemy planes watched the Black Invaders over Shanghai, but made no effort to interfere.

Jun 20, 1945. The day started with the 403<sup>rd</sup> giving the Whampoa Docks a pasting at 0345 with 12 X 500 demos. The crew was delighted to see a very large fire result that lasted over 20 minutes. The run was coordinated visual/radar with altitude at 9500'. There were no searchlights, and AA was meager and inaccurate. Night fighters were much in evidence, although not very aggressive. Some shots from far out were fired at the B-24 which did not reply and it experienced no damage. The lights were on in Hong Kong. Shinchiku Drome with planes on the ground was the target for the daylight squadrons. The weather was only fair and the run began on H2X with visual corrections made in the last half minute of the run. The 403<sup>rd</sup> dropped all using H2X while toggling on the leader. The load was 20 lb. frag clusters from 12,000'. AA was meager, holing 3 planes. Clouds covered part of the target, but black smoke indicated that some planes were probably destroyed. There was a problem that could have been dangerous as some of the bundles of frags broke open too soon and pieces of the hardware hit the planes following, and in one case two bombs themselves hit the nose and top turret of one plane causing extensive damage. The bombs did not explode but the gunners were injured slightly and plenty shaken up.

More and more attention was to be paid to the Kamikaze menace.

The night of June 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> was the first mission for a new 63<sup>rd</sup> crew as well as a long one from Clark to Shanghai to Nanking and back. Lt. F. Neal Fugate and crew joined the delta trippers and finding no shipping, climbed to 10,000' to hit oil storage at Nanking. Bombs were off target, but hit some warehouses. Rope was used and no AA was seen by either this plane or Lt. Canevari's following. Nor were any night fighters around, but searchlights probed the sky. The second plane laid bombs through the target and started a small fire. Both planes dropped leaflets and landed at Laoag for fuel as they encountered headwinds on the return trip.

Jun 21, 1945. There was no daylight strike on this date.

Jun 21/22nd, 1945. The 64<sup>th</sup> went to Shinchiku Drome with frags with hopes of getting a fighter or two on the ground. They made 4 runs in an hour, dropping 60 bombs each time beginning at 0135 hours. Undercast blocked any assessments. Meager AA low, no night fighters, rope seemed to divert the search lights.

Once again the Seahawks went to Nanking. An H2X plane was to precede the LAB bombers and light some fires in the oil storage area before the 2 followers arrived. The H2X plane was being flown by a new crew but they could not get a good return on the radar, so they dropped where they thought it was and hoped for the best. There were nil fires to light the others in. There was haze and smog over the area and the first plane could not be sure where the tanks were, neither could the two followers. They too dropped blind. No searchlights, no AA or no night fighters were seen, and no bomb damage was seen.

Toshien got a wake up call at 0114 on the 22<sup>nd</sup> when a 64<sup>th</sup> plane kept them up for 2 hours. Frags were dropped from varying altitudes with the plane being holed once. No results were seen from the dropped bombs due to the haze. The bomber harassed the coast between bomb runs and was intercepted near Takao where an exchange of fire took

place, but no damage was done to either side. Leaflets were dropped. Toshein's day was just beginning as the strike squadrons would be back in a few hours.

Jun 22, 1945. Ken's Men had a poor turnout with 11 of only 12 planes that took off make it to the target, Toshein, Formosa, striking an oil refinery with spectacular results resulting in lots of fires, smoke and explosions as both refining and storage facilities were hit. The 64<sup>th</sup> had 5 planes over the target dropping 1000 lb. demos from 13,000'. Smoke rose to 10,000'. The AA was accurate and heavy, holing 6 planes. One 65<sup>th</sup> plane was intercepted when the pilot went back to take an oblique photo. An Oscar made one pass shattering the copilot's windshield and cutting his hand. This Oscar must have been hanging around the clouds and seeing the B-24 leave the formation, he made the one quick pass. The crew was lucky and had another lesson in the importance of staying together. Despite the 43<sup>rd</sup>'s poor turnout, the damage was great. This night and into the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 3 Sea Hawks were out. Two went to Shanghai/Nanking with one ferret doing the Hong Kong to Indo-China route. Nanking was 10/10 covered with clouds so bombs were dropped on a guess and ETA/H2X. Four bogeys were sighted on radar, but aside from blinking lights at each other, they did not venture closer than a quarter mile. The ferret flight was very quiet and the one probing searchlight from near Canton did not seem to be looking for the B-24.

Jun 23, 1945. Early this morning a 65<sup>th</sup> H2X bombing Canton started large fires using 12 X 500 lb. incendiaries. The bombs were dropped on radar on a prominent point in Pearl River at 0113 hours. Moderate AA holed the plane once while night fighters made 2 firing passes closing to 100 yards, but there was no damage and the fire was returned. The 64<sup>th</sup> had a daylight armed recco to Wenchow and the China coast dropping 7 X 100 lb. general purpose bombs on the Taiharo Sugar Refinery. AA holed the plane once. Weather was reported, but no shipping was sighted. (Pettus says he checked this [weird] bomb load twice.)

The strike squadrons were given a new target, Koki, with sugar refineries the aiming points. Formosa sugar was important to Japan as food, but also to make butanol. Bombing was good using 8 X 1000 lb. demos from 12,000'. The run was started on H2X but opened up and almost every bomb was in the mass of buildings that burned and exploded. Despite considerable AA only 2 planes were hit. One Tony made a very fast pass at the 65<sup>th</sup> and was seen no more. [Jim Cherkauer has a very interesting story about this mission in his diary and memoirs, but it does not belong here.] Two 403<sup>rd</sup> planes experienced mechanical problems and bombed targets of opportunity, one at Taito and one at Mako where the Japanese used smudge pots to try to hide the fuel storage. The bombing results were unobserved.

This day was both a happy and sad day for KEN'S MEN as that great campaigner Lt. Col. Harry Staley completed two full tours with the 43<sup>rd</sup> and had flown in every major campaign of the unit. During his second tour he was Deputy Group Commander and Col. Pettus' strong right arm. He would be missed by all.

Again with missions starting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and finishing the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup>, one 63<sup>rd</sup> plane was out to check the Shanghai blind bombing zone for traffic. The crew found one Fox Tare Dog, but due to faulty radar they missed it. Two big junks nearby that seemed to be loading or unloading were worked over by strafing and were either badly damaged or sunk.

Jun 24, 1945. There was no daylight strike this day. But the 65<sup>th</sup> started the day early at the Whampoa Docks near Canton with at 0030 the B-24 made an H2X run of 12 miles and dropped 12 X 500# lb. demos. The target was hard to make out on scope and a 10/10 undercast made results impossible to determine. Two night fighters followed the bomber for a few minutes but never made any aggressive moves.

The 64<sup>th</sup> had the day weather recco to Wenchow. No shipping was sighted so 2 runs were made on Mako, the secondary, with poor results due to bombardier malfunction. The AA was moderate and low, and there was no fighter interception. Japanese seem to flight at night at Mako rather than in the day.

This night and next morning the Sea Hawks sent one plane to keep an eye on Yangtze and Nanking. No ships were seen and 4 X 500 lb. bombs were dropped on the oil storage depot. The results were unobserved due to searchlights and haze. No big fires were sighted. One night fighter was in attendance but did not attack. A bright fire and signals of three dots-three dashes were seen half an hour after the B-24 left the target.

The 403<sup>rd</sup> had the weather recco this early A.M. going to the Canton area. The target was the Whampoo Docks, and the load was 24 X 250 lb. demos. The run was H2X due to ground haze and only bomb bursts were seen. One night fighter made a long range firing pass but received no return fire. This night fighter was joined by 2 others that flew a quarter mile away for half an hour.

Jun 25, 1945. The daylight weather recco fell to the 65<sup>th</sup> and was flown along the China Coast from Amoy to Wenchow and then to Mako for bombing. The front was still around Wenchow. The bombing was off due to C-1 malfunction. The recco was only 90% due to the command radio going out.

There was no daylight strike this day.

The same routine was followed with the 63<sup>rd</sup> planes going out on the 25<sup>th</sup> and into the 26<sup>th</sup>. The route was Shanghai/Yangtze/Nanking and no ships were sighted. Bombs were dropped at the illusive oil depot with no results observed. A night fighter followed the B-24 for a few minutes into the delta area. Nan-Tung Drome was lighted and truck traffic was seen almost as if they knew #694 was not headed for them.

June 26, 1945. There was something new for ferrets - a daylight strike for the 63<sup>rd</sup> along the China coast from 0550 to 2200 hours. Amoy to Hong Kong and environs with no incidents, but a tiring day for the turret men, who if not in the turret, had to be just outside in case radar spotted a bogey.

The 403<sup>rd</sup> had the early H2X to Whampoo Docks again. A P-61 escort was not seen or heard from and bombs were away at 0335 from 10,500'. The load was 24 X 250 lb. demos, but 4 hung up. After the bomber left the target, 2 night fighters appeared and were quite aggressive for a few minutes. The enemy planes showed no lights as so often had been the case.

Maintenance had 18 bombers ready that took off for Tanshi Sugar Refinery this day. Fifteen made it over the target with 1000 lb. demos at an altitude of 11,550'. About 75% were on target and many buildings were destroyed with fires resulting. AA was moderate but accurate damaging 5 bombers. Of the 3 planes that turned back, one hit Koshun Town and destroyed buildings.

A 63<sup>rd</sup> B-24 went to Shanghai on the 26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> and it did find some small Sugar Dogs, but sea scatter on the scope saved the ships. Three bombs were dropped with all missing the target. The bomber took the last bomb to bomb the Texas Oil Co. but missed. With no

bombs left and fuel running short, the plane skipped going to Nanking. Shanghai was blacked out but one of the airfields had its runway lights on.

Jun 27, 1945. There was no daylight strike on this date.

A 64<sup>th</sup> H2X went back to Canton and the Whampoo Docks with 24 X 250 lb. demos. The plane was over the target at 0325 with an altitude of 10,500'. The AA was meager and only one night fighter trailed the bomber for 10 minutes. An undercast prevented any assessment of the bombing results.

The 65<sup>th</sup> had the day's weather recco to Wenchow, but again the bombing was bad due to the C-1 being off or out. 12 X 500 lb. bombs went in the water that must have given the Japanese a laugh and some fish. Meager AA still holed the plane once. Two twin-engine fighters paid a call but only fired once from 600 yards. When it appeared that they were turning for another run, the bomber gunners fired a few tracers, but then the bomber found a friendly cloud to hide in. The fighters no doubt took credit for breaking up the bomb run.

The night of the 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> a ferret to Shanghai and Nanking was completed without incident. These ferret flights always carried members of the ferret detachment assigned to the 63<sup>rd</sup>. Two or more operators sat in the bowels of the bomb bays looking at the scopes and revolving receiver tuners. It was a boring and tiring job with no window to see out of.

A lone Sea Hawk found the same paucity of ships in the Yangtze. The secondary target was the Woosung Cotton Mills, but conditions were so black that the target could not be seen. Bombs were dropped on ETA and no results were seen. One U/1 plane was seen in the Formosa Straits; it closed but did not fire.

At 0250 that morning a 403<sup>rd</sup> H2X tried for the Small Arms Factory in Canton. 12 X 500 lb. demos went down through the undercast from 9000' after a good run and return on the scope. AA holed the plane once. There were no night fighters. The P-61 fighter escort was contacted by radio while the bomber was on its return flight some 200 miles from the target and only after the B-24 had fired a flare and turned on its lights.

The day weather recco to Wenchow and the Pescadores encountered some radar jamming while off the coast of Formosa. Weather was reported and at Mako there were towering cumulus clouds that made bombing difficult. Sixty miles from Wenchow one fighter paid a call but did not fire. Again, when it looked as if he might come in, the B-24 gunner gave him a bit of tracer.

The daylight strike was to the Keishu Butanol Plant and all 18 bombers made it to the target where they dropped their bombs very well. The 65<sup>th</sup> had half its bombs in the target as did the 64<sup>th</sup>. The less said about the 403<sup>rd</sup> the better. Still large fires were started and much damage was done by the 1000 lb. demos that hit. Altitude was 12,000'. To add insult to the bombers, 8 of them were damaged by AA but with no injuries. Rope and jammers were used, but it did not seem to put the enemy gunners off. V Bomber Command decided that the butanol plant was temporarily out of commission as a result of recent attacks. [This strike may have taken place on the 28<sup>th</sup>.]

Jun 28, 1945. [No mention is made of what the day strike squadrons did this date, but the above mission by the day squadrons may have been on the 28<sup>th</sup> as seems to be indicated by remarks made for the 29<sup>th</sup>'s mission. With no times being mentioned, it is difficult to know if the actions for this day and into the 29<sup>th</sup> are in chronological order.]

One Sea Hawk heading to Shanghai had radio trouble and turned back dropping its bombs on the ever available Mako. The bombs were short in the boat basin, but there didn't seem to be any boats there anyway.

Another 63<sup>rd</sup> chased a patrol craft near the China coast, but the patrol skipper was clever and all bombs (8 X 500 lb.) missed from an altitude of 1000'. This air search was from Amoy to Swatow, but again no ships were sighted.

An anti-radar ferret in the Canton/Hong Kong area ran into violent thunderstorms that cut the mission down to 60%. Off the China coast a night fighter was encountered, but although he closed to 150 yards, he did not fire, nor did the B-24.

June 29, 1945. The Wenchow weather recco was the 65<sup>th</sup>s, and again they came back to Mako to get some bombing practice and excitement. The run was made at 1133 with 12 X 250 lb. bombs dropped on the target and the other 12 had to be levered out as they would not release electrically. Hits were scored on buildings and a large fire sprang up. One interceptor came up but was put off by several squirts of tracers.

The Shinchiku Oil Refinery was the target of the daylight squadrons, but only 12 planes were scheduled to take part. Eleven made it over the target and the 403<sup>rd</sup> was determined to atone for its disgrace on the 28<sup>th</sup>. [That mission above was on the 28<sup>th</sup> and not the 27<sup>th</sup>.] Seventy-six of 88 bombs were on the nose and destroyed buildings and started fires with smoke to 8000'. One bomb that fell long hit tanks and started fires. Also 7 bombs that fell 200' south of the target touched off 3 explosions. The 403<sup>rd</sup> was 100% in the target. AA was accurate and holed 6 planes but there were no injuries. Several planes had bomb release problems so a second run was made by them and the confusion spread formations with 2 enemy fighters taking advantage as usual. There was smoke to 10,000' and flames shot high in the air.

On the 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> two Sea Hawks went in opposite directions, one to Shanghai and the other to Haiphong. The Yangtze mission found no ships but was fortunate to have visibility, and they gave the Cotton Mills a good lick. A large building was demolished by bombs and a large explosion was heard.

The Haiphong plane found no big ships, but it did find a bunch of small ones. After one pass over the harbor, it saw 6 Sugar Dogs together at a dock. Coming in at 250' it let go 6 X 500 lb. demos and blew up at least 4 as well as hitting the docks. The crew felt pretty lucky having spent 2 hours looking for bigger ships while flying up the river. On their way out of the harbor they saw what they might have been sent to find, i.e., 5 medium sized vessels and more Sugar Dogs. Haiphong lies up the Cua Cua River (now Red River) in a very complex delta. Radar returns are very hard to get from this area due to the large number of islands and shoals. Somehow they missed the reference point, so they went in to attack the ships in the city itself. Night fighters were around and made firing passes but did no damage. The Sea Hawks had sunk boats after a very long dry spell.

Jun 30, 1945. Denying the enemy alcohol was again the objective on the 30<sup>th</sup>, and 15 B-24s hit the Heito Sugar Refinery. Bombing was good but could have been better. The target was smothered with 1000 lb. demos and great damage resulted. Flames were seen to 500' and smoke to 7000' with intermittent explosions making a spectacular show. AA was heavy and although not too accurate, 4 planes were holed. One 403<sup>rd</sup> plane was seriously damaged losing control on the run due to a shot out elevator cable. The crew regained control and landed using auto pilot and trim. Three men were injured; one, though



walking, went to the hospital. The 403<sup>rd</sup> made a second run as the plane dropping out had thrown the first run off. Regardless, only one plane put its bombs on target.

The 403<sup>rd</sup> completed the month when at 1158 they dropped 7 X 500 lb. bombs 1000' off target at the Keishu Butanol Plant. The plant appeared to be 50% burned out. The plane went on to Foochow on a weather recco that was 90% completed. A destroyer escort was sighted at 2610N - 1195E and reported.

A 65<sup>th</sup> H2X scored a bull's eye on an oil refinery near Canton. At 0106 the plane dropped 12 X 550 lb. bombs starting 3 large fires. Ten minutes after bombing 2 twin-engine night fighters made non-firing passes but were soon lost in the clouds. AA was meager and inaccurate; rope and chaff were used. Their P-61 escort was seen later in the area of Lingayen Gulf.

A Pettus tale that he can't find in the Group or Sqd. Histories is given below in Jim's own words. Gen. Whitehead called me and said that he had two visiting RAF Air Vice Marshals who wanted to look at a bomb group and go on a mission. He called me, knowing I had been in the RCAF, to look after them. I said I thought they were foolish to want to go on a mission to Formosa as the AA was dangerous, but that was up to them. Did the generals want me to fly them? or lead? The answer was NO; just show them how we do it, nothing special.

The AVMs arrived after dinner and spent the night with me. I was up at 0430 to have breakfast, go to the briefing, and to see them off. They flew in different squadron lead planes. I did not fly; this was during my time as Clark C.O. "In flights" messages came in saying AA was heavy, accurate and several planes had been hit, but with no injuries or emergencies. Bombing was described as excellent.

When they were due back, I went to the strip and picked up the first man, then waited for his companion. We learned by radio that the plane carrying the #2 AVM had had an emergency; the engine was out and they wanted a straight-in approach. That was granted, and then we heard the plane had a second engine out, and then a third quit. We headed for the crash site looking for the smoke when we saw the plane going down the runway in the opposite direction with three engines feathered. Clark had a large roll-off, about 1200 - 1550 feet circular, and then end of the double strip and here the plane came to rest - no added damage, but something was wrong somewhere.

By the time we arrived the AVM had the shaking crew in front of the plane taking their pictures with the three feathered props in the background. As we rolled up #1 AVM calls out, "I say Freddie, did you push the wrong button or something?" The crew were all saying Hail Marys. I believe the pilot was Capt. Agard. In any event both AVMs were very cool; they could not stop talking about the "Wizard Bombing - absolutely wizard, never saw anything like it. We did not believe these reports and will tell Whitehead." I delivered them back to Fifth Air Force Headquarters.

We found the problem with the engines, a small piece of flak. It had hit the main fuel transfer line, but as long as the engine driven fuel pumps were on, fuel was sucked past the hole, (although there was some leakage) to the engine. As soon as landing procedures went into effect, it was "tank - to engine - to cross feed," and booster pumps on. The booster pump was located at the base of the main tank and had a pressure GREATER than the engine driven pump. So fuel was being pumped overboard from the cross feed line that fed all engines. In combat mode the tank fed only its respective engine. So we nearly lost a plane and an AVM. We changed the landing check list to DO NOT TURN ON BOOSTER PUMPS unless you have a loss of fuel pressure on that engine.

That's the tale of the "Wizard Bombing."

[This concerns the mission on June 23, 1945, that Jim Cherkauer stated earlier that he had a story about too. It differs considerably with that of Col. Pettus. We discussed this once at a reunion a few years ago. Jim Pettus did not accept Jim Cherkauer's telling of what took place on this mission to cause the 65<sup>th</sup> C.O., Max Williams, to run out of fuel when approaching Clark Field for a landing, but Cherkauer not Pettus was on the mission and saw what took place first hand. The last paragraph of the Pettus tale does not jive with what the flight engineer told Jim C. about 8 years ago, but it may well be a true but partial explanation of why Major Max Williams (not Capt. Herb Agard), 65<sup>th</sup> C.O. landed with only one engine partially operating. All this could have been avoided had the Major followed normal procedures during the mission. The rest of this story as recorded by Jim Cherkauer will not be given here.]

Added mission info for the 43rd Bomb Group History as recalled by George O. Anderson

On May 10th 45 I was selected to lead the 403 sqd combat mission to Canton, China. It was a long mission over water from Clark field in the Philippines. The weather was forecasted to be fully instruments enroute to the target and weather at Canton was very questionable. There were many squadrons in the bomber train and our squadron was about in the middle. Since we were all in the soup we were only separated by a time interval based upon our take off times. About 3/4's into the mission I heard from someone ahead that the target was socked in and that they had turned around and were heading home. Needless to say this was a shocker since no one knew where anyone else was or what their altitude was - a headon collision was imminent. The only choice I had was to turn the squadron around and hope for the best. Fortunately for everyone no collisions occurred. A plan for future situations of this nature had to be formulated and was.

On June 8th, 45 my crew was tasked to fly a recce mission to Wenchow china from Clark field. Ours was the only mission to fly that day due to extremely bad weather. I did not have all of my regular crew. I had a relatively new navigator in the sqd. but he had flown some missions. When we arrived at the aircraft (tail #821) it had 8 1000lb bombs in the bomb bay. We had been briefed that we were not to carry any bombs only 50 cal ammo. When I told this to the crew chief he went over to the bomb bay and triggered off all of the bombs on the ground. This kinda unsettled me but he said this was the routine way of down loading the bombs.

We took off in rain, climbed out in the soup and headed north. We flew in the soup. The navigator reported we were on course when he saw the Pesedores islands off Formosa thru a hole in the clouds. This was comforting. About 15 minutes from the target area we broke out into clear sky. We continued towards the target fully expecting to be intercepted by zeros but we were lucky. Just before reaching our turning point a crew member reported the siting of a large transport in a cove just ahead and wanted to go down and strafe it. I determined that this was not in our mission requirement and even if we did go down we could only bring the nose guns to bear on the target with little or no damage could be expected. We made our turn for home and again entered the soup. About 10 hours into the mission the navigator came to the flight deck and reported that he had no idea where he was. He had not been able to get any fixes and at that point he gave up and went to the back of the aircraft. Since we should have been fairly close to the Philippines I tried to make radio contact without results. I then decided to drop down below the clouds if possible. I finally broke out just above the water. What was I to do. No land in sight - we had reached out land fall - and no radio

contact. I had no idea where we were! Looking to the west which had some visibility didn't reveal anything. To the east it was raining buckets and was pitch black. I elected to make a 90 degree turn to the left hoping that land was in that direction. After flying about a half hour and repeatedly making calls on the radio I finally picked up someone - I had made the right decision. If I had turned to the right I wouldn't be typing this report! After flying for some time my position was confirmed via a HF/DF steer repeated several times. I was given a new heading to fly and the contact confirmed my altitude being 500 feet. Reviewing my inbound heading and altitude I realized I was heading right into the mountain range on the northern part of Luzon. I made a quick 180 degree turn and climbed to a safe altitude. Radar guided me thru the mountainous area to the Clark field area. All this time I was in the soup and with questionable confidence in the radar keeping me in the clear of the mountains. Arriving over the airport at Clark found the field socked in. I circled around for awhile and found a hole in the clouds and saw the runway. My B24 became a P51 and I dove thru the hole hoping I could level out below the clouds which were extremely low. I lucked out again and the landing was uneventful. The maintenance men and the crew chief listening to me overhead and then seeing me punch thru the hole in the clouds thought we were going straight into the ground. Needless to say we were thankful for our safe arrival and I had more than a few words for that navigator. It was a 12 hour and 30 minute mission.

**Events and Description of Tours**  
**43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Reunion**  
**In Philadelphia and Valley Forge**  
**September 3<sup>rd</sup> ~ 9<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

- **Monday, Sept 3<sup>rd</sup>:** Labor Day Welcome Reception at Fred Hagen's farm in Buck's county featuring "Philly Food". Bus will depart the Doubletree Inn at 4:45 pm. The party is scheduled from 5:00 pm ~ 8:00 pm. Minimal fee: \$15.00 per person. Children welcome!
- **Tuesday, Sept 4<sup>th</sup>:** Optional tour to Gettysburg.  
Driving tour of the Battlefield covering approximately 25 miles with guide who brings the Battle strategy and stories to life. Dobbin House Tavern for a deli lunch ... and a memorable hour with Jim Getty as Abraham Lincoln, our 16th President. Getty has portrayed Lincoln since 1977. Nap on the bus.  
Departure at 7:30 am ~ Returning at approximately 5:00 pm. \$80 per person.
- **Tuesday Evening:** Board of Directors meeting from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm in the Conference Room.  
**Wednesday, Sept 5<sup>th</sup>:** Many choices: Play Golf with Sam (Price TBD), Play Bridge at the Hotel, visit the King of Prussia Mall, or take the Optional Guided Tour to Lancaster County and visit the Old Order Amish. We begin with a visit to the Amish Experience for an introduction to their lifestyle. These people, who have inhabited this area for more than 250 years, live today much like their forefathers who came to Pennsylvania to escape religious persecution. Hear fascinating commentary on their lifestyle and tour the Homestead (replica of typical Old Order Amish home) Enjoy lunch at one of the family-style restaurants (or possibly in a private Amish home) and sample it all: fried chicken, ham, meat loaf, mashed potatoes, vegetables, and a variety of desserts! All delicious!  
Depart Hotel at 8:30 am ~ Returning 2:30/3:00 pm. \$60.00 per person
- **Wednesday Evening:** Included within your Standard Activities Fee is a special evening at the famous William Penn Inn, established in 1714. It begins with a cocktail reception and dinner, and entertainment by the Romano Sisters who will take you back in time. The Squadron Meetings will follow ~ so, this evening is a must! Bus departs Hotel at 4:45 pm and will return the ladies to the Hotel following dinner and the men following their meetings.
- **Thursday, Sept 6<sup>th</sup>:** Optional Guided Tour of Historic Cultural Philadelphia.  
Visit Independence Hall (built as the State House for the colony of PA and the site where the Declaration of Independence was signed and the U.S. Constitution was debated, written, and signed; Congress Hall, building which served the U.S. Congress during the period of 1790-1800 when Philadelphia served as the federal capital; the recently opened National

Constitution Center, building totally dedicated to the better understanding of the U.S. Constitution ~ an interactive experience; Christ Church, founded in 1695 where many of the patriots worshipped.....and much more. Also included is a driving overview of the city passing City Hall, Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Avenue of the Arts, Society Hill. Lunch in Delegates Restaurant of National Constitution Center. Bus departs Hotel at 9:00 am ~ Returns to Hotel at 4:00 pm. \$50.00 per person

- **Thursday Evening:** An exceptionally special evening has been planned at the exquisite, historic and private The Union League Club of Philadelphia, founded in 1862 as a patriotic society to support the policies of President Abraham Lincoln. It is said that President Lincoln declined an invitation to this private club because of a previous commitment and tickets to Ford Theatre. Do you dare decline? Cocktails and Dinner: \$60.00 per person.

Jackets for men. No jeans. No sneakers. Bus departs Hotel at 6:00 pm.

- **Friday and Friday Evening:** General Group Meeting in the morning with the afternoon open for The Memorabilia Room and/or the King of Prussia Mall. The Photograph session and Dinner/Dance, included within the Standard Activities Fee, will be this evening.
- **Saturday, Sept 8<sup>th</sup>:** Included within the Standard Activities Fee is a special Guided Tour of Valley Forge National Park with the Memorial Service at Washington Memorial Chapel. Included within our guided tour of this most sacred site of the American Revolution is a stop at Muhlenberg's brigade to see reconstructed huts and Washington's headquarters. The Washington Memorial Chapel, built in 1903 as a tribute to George Washington, offers many significant points of historical and religious interest. Lunch is included at Freedom's Foundation. Bus departs Hotel at 10:00 am ~ Returns at 3:00 pm
- **Saturday Evening:** Included within the Standard Activities Fee: a Buffet Dinner at the Hotel with entertainment.
- **Sunday, Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>:** Begin the day with a glorious Sunday Brunch and follow with an afternoon of culture at the Franklin Institute. The Brunch is included within the Standard Activities Fee. The Optional Tour to the fabulous King Tutankhamen and The Golden Age of Pharaohs Exhibit is the last chance to see the Egyptian artifacts from the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, including the child-sized throne of ebony, ivory and gold and artifacts from the tombs of five other Pharaohs of this period. The exhibit is double that of thirty years ago and Philadelphia is the last stop! \$60.00 per person. Bus departs hotel following Brunch.

# ACTIVITIES REGISTRATION FORM

43rd Bomb Group Reunion

Philadelphia/Valley Forge

September 3rd-September 9th, 2007

Fill in and return with payment to:

43rd Bomb Group c/o Alfred Hagen, 2207 State Road, Bensalem, PA 19020

YES! Sign me up for 43rd Bomb Group Reunion in Philadelphia/Valley Forge September 3-9, 2007

I have read and understood the terms as indicated on the flier.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name Tag Nickname \_\_\_\_\_ Name Tag Nickname \_\_\_\_\_

Squadron \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*Please list any additional names on back of paper with Nicknames and Squadron (If Applicable)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Banquet Meal Choice: \_\_\_\_\_ Meat \_\_\_\_\_ Fish \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian \_\_\_\_\_

William Penn Inn Dinner: \_\_\_\_\_ Fish \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ Filet Mignon \_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian \_\_\_\_\_

Single Dinner Tickets for the Wm. Penn Inn Dinner, Banquet, and Buffet are available at \$30.00 per person.

Standard Reunion Activities include: Hot breakfast each day, Valley Forge Tour w/lunch, Dinner at Wm. Penn Inn, Banquet and Buffet at Hotel, and Farewell Brunch.

#of people _____	x\$235.00 per person for Standard Reunion Activities	=	
	Package (There is no discount for children)		
#of people _____	x\$15.00 Welcome Party at Fred Hagen's farm (9/3/07)	=	
	(5:00-8:00 pm) Bus will depart hotel at 4:45 p.m.		
#of people _____	x\$90.00 for Optional Gettysburg & Eisenhower Farm	=	
	Tour (includes lunch) (9/4/07)		
#of people _____	x\$60.00 for Optional Amish Country Tour (includes	=	
	lunch) (9/5/07)		
#of people _____	Golf(\$TBD) or # _____ Bridge(\$0)(Options)(9/5/07)	=	
#of people _____	William Penn dinner (included in activities package)	=	<u>incl.w/in pkg</u> **
	(9/5/07 evening) Squadron Meetings follow dinner		
#of people _____	x\$50.00 Optional Phila. Tour(Constitution Ctr, Congress	=	
	Hall, Independence Hall)(includes lunch) (9/6/07)		
#of people _____	x\$60.00 for Optional Dinner at the private Union League	=	
	Philadelphia (9/6/07 evening)		
#of people _____	Banquet at Hotel & Photo Session (9/7/07)	=	<u>incl.w/in pkg</u> **
#of people _____	Valley Forge Tour & Memorial Service (9/8/07)	=	<u>incl.w/in pkg</u>
#of people _____	Buffet Dinner at Hotel (9/8/07)	=	<u>incl.w/in pkg</u> **
#of people _____	Farewell Brunch at Hotel (9/9/07)	=	<u>incl.w/in pkg</u>
#of people _____	x\$60.00 for Optional King Tut Tour at Franklin	=	
	Institute (9/9/07)		
#of people _____	x\$25.00 Late registration fee after July 1, 2007	=	
	Total Amount Enclosed	=	

**\*\*ADD \$30 PER GUEST PER EVENT**

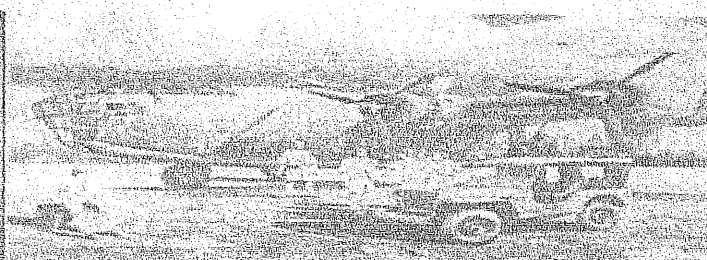
Please indicate if a "lift coach" is required for bus transportation \_\_\_\_\_

(Currently unavailable for Gettysburg tour.)

Enclosed is check # \_\_\_\_\_

In case of cancellation, deposits will be refunded in accordance w/event & restaurant policies





# ~Philadelphia / Valley Forge~ September 3rd - September 9th, 2007

## \*EVENTS\*

Tours of Gettysburg, Philadelphia and Valley Forge  
New National Constitution Center  
Award winning multimedia presentation in the new Kimmel Theater  
Freedom Rising  
Reception and Dinner at the Union League of Philadelphia  
(A private club patronized by numerous Presidents including Abraham Lincoln)  
George Washington's Headquarters at Valley Forge  
Memorial Service in the Washington Memorial Chapel  
Visit the Amish Country  
King "Tut" and the Golden Age of Pharaohs Exhibit at the Franklin Institute  
Other surprises await! Bring the entire family, children and grandchildren.  
Make this a memorable family affair.

~New Luxurious Accommodations~  
~Hot Breakfast Buffet each morning~  
~Free Parking~

## \*Accommodations\*

### The Doubletree Guest Suites

640 West Germantown Pike, Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462

Call Toll-Free Central Reservations 1-800-222-TREE

Rooms are held under: The 43rd Bomb Group - "2007" Reunion

**\*Special room rate of \$89.00 per night until April 1, 2007\***

(Rate will increase to \$104.00 per night after April 1st)

\* Deposits are fully refundable up two days in advance of the reunion date\*

## Make your Reservations Today!

43rd Bomb Group Reunion

### The Doubletree Guest Suites

#### 43rd BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION-HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

Name(s) of Guest(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Rooms: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Beds: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure date: \_\_\_\_\_ Special Requests: i.e. Handicapped room: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form and mail to: Alfred Hagen Construction, Attn: Suzanne Crain, 2207 State Road, Bensalem, PA 19020

(215) 633-7540 email: [scrain@hagenconstruction.com](mailto:scrain@hagenconstruction.com)

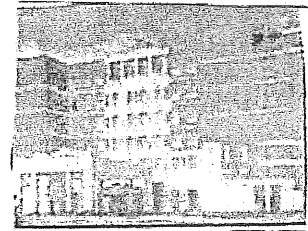
CREDIT CARD DEPOSIT (Circle One) VISA MASTERCARD AMERICAN EXPRESS

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Card Holders Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Or make check, money order or cashier's check payable to Doubletree Guest Suites




**TRAVEL INFORMATION**  
**TO THE DOUBLETREE GUEST SUITES HOTEL**  
**640 WEST GERMANTOWN PIKE**  
**PLYMOUTH MEETING, PA. 19462**



**BY AIR:** PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT is serviced by 30 airlines including Air Tran Airways, America West, American Airlines, Continental, Delta Air Lines, Frontier Airlines, United Express, US Airways, Northwest and Southwest and Midwest Airlines & United Airlines.

There is a **Ground Transportation Information desk** located in each baggage claim area where a representative can assist you by providing a list of transportation providers authorized to travel to your destination. Wheelchair accessible transportation options are available to and from the airport. The DoubleTree Guest Suites recommends **Tropiano: (215) 616-5370 and (800) 559-2040** as the Shuttle Service. Currently the costs are: \$24 cash/\$29 credit card each way or \$43 cash/\$49 credit card for round trip if done at airport in advance.

**BY AUTOMOBILE:** **FROM AIRPORT:** Take I-95 South to 476 North to the last exit 9- Germantown Pike-West. Merge with Germantown Pike and follow for 3 lights. Make a right onto Hickory Rd. at the 3<sup>rd</sup> light. The hotel is the 3<sup>rd</sup> building on the left. **FROM NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE:** Take the New Jersey Turnpike to exit 6, which is PA Turnpike. Go West to exit 25-Norristown and follow signs to Plymouth Rd. Go to the 1<sup>st</sup> light and make a left. Go to the next light and make a right onto Germantown Pike. Go to the second light and make a Right on Hickory Rd. The hotel is the second driveway on the left. **FROM WASHINGTON DC-WILMINGTON-DELAWARE:** Take I-95 North to RT 476 North. Take RT 476 to the Germantown Pike West exit 9. Go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> light, Hickory Rd., and make a right. The second driveway on the left is the hotel. **FROM ROUTE 476;** Take 476 to the Germantown Pike West exit 9. Go to the 3<sup>rd</sup> light, Hickory Rd., and make a right. The hotel is the 2<sup>nd</sup> driveway on the left. **FROM HARRISBURG;** Take Pennsylvania Turnpike East to exit 25, Norristown. Follow signs to Plymouth Rd. Go to the 1<sup>st</sup> light and make a left. Then Go to the next light and make a right onto Germantown Pike. Go to the 2<sup>nd</sup> light and make a right on Hickory Rd. The hotel is the second driveway on the left.

Directions  [View Interactive Map](#)

