



43RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC. "KEN'S MEN"



NEWSLETTER 109th EDITION JANUARY 2009

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*=Deceased

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

In this month of January, in the new year of 2009, the country observes the inauguration of a new president. One important significance of this event is that while the War on Terror still rages in the world, the President becomes a new Commander-In-Chief. The challenges that this presents is made more serious by the precarious economy status of the country and the world. This veteran's group is comprised of a generation of those who have faced, and lived through, such challenges before. Now, once again, we will hope and pray that our leaders will face up to this task to preserve our freedom into a brighter future.

In November we were invited to address a Chapter of the Daughters of The American Revolution. I chose a theme for my talk that no war is ever popular, and historically none have ever had total support of our citizens. Dissenting views have always been a thorn in the posteriors of our leaders. Few may recall that even in the great American Revolution more Colonists fought with the British than with George Washington's poorly equipped Army. Many citizens who supported him in theory were afraid to provide any form of support for the Rebellion. We know that the Great War Between The States was the epitome of dissent in our citizenry.

Because of the significance of dissent, Revisionists have dominated history in presenting their views of how the wars could have been prevented, and by many others presenting their views of how it could have been more easily won, usually battle by battle. Notable examples are the debates of the decision to use atomic bombs, and did the Holocaust really happen. So it will always be.

Just days after my D. A. R. Visit I was invited to visit a local first grade class, This was a bright contrast. We took along our die-cast model

of the B-24 and the wide-eyed [redacted] scholars asked many excellent questions. It is a hopeful sign that many educators now recognize the importance of a knowledge of History. History has too often been lost in the academic mix with the advancement of an electronic sauce of Blackberries, Lap-tops, PC's and I-Pods! These are great tools for learning, including historic research, but the desire to learn must be nurtured early in the education process.

It is our goal that these important principles of freedom and citizenship be passed on to future generations. But, as the world has been compressed by modern transportation and communication, a better understanding of the world and the need for Law and Order in the world are essential to those freedoms.

Eldon E. Lawson

*****EDITOR'S and MEMBER'S REPORTS*****

Don't interfere with anything in the Constitution. That must be maintained, for it is the only safeguard of our liberties. *Abraham Lincoln*

A message from **Jim Cherkauer**: "I am sending a new address for **Jack Nunnellee, 64th Squadron, Nose Gunner**. I have been holding off for some time in hopes that he would be going back to his own home, but June Panther tells us that this probably will never be the case. He had a hip replacement after a fall caused by his very bad knees. The doctors had refused to operate on his knees due to his age. They have told him that a knee operation would not heal properly. So now the doctors tell him never try to walk again. As a result Jack is now in a nursing home very close to where he once lived." Jack's new address is: Jack T. Nunnellee, Gibson Creek Cottages (Apt. 150), 1615 Brush College Road, Salem, OR 97304.

A new Associate Member, **Rodney Carlson**, a retired Industrial Engineer, whose address is 1602 Little Sioux Lane, Cozad, NE 69130 and phone (308) 784-2567. Rod writes: "My brother, **Sgt. Donald W. Carlson** was a member of **Lt. Howard Barnett's B-17 crew** who were reported missing in action 6June43 on a mission to Vunakanau Rabaul. They were flying this mission in the 63rd Squadron B-17F "PLUTO" S/N 41-24543. The remains of the crew were recovered in 1948 and interred at Jefferson National Cemetery at St. Louis, MO - Section 84 Site 403-405."

The daughter of **Leonard H. Clark, Pilot, Susan Lanson** has become a new Associate Member. Susan reports: "I would like to meet and obtain stories from the men that served with and during the time of my father. My father had an extensive collection of photographs as well as other WWII material. We have recently donated it as a private collection to the George Mason University in Virginia, where it is being scanned. It will soon be on line. I would like to create a link to your web site, to give as well as share, the information in the documents in our collection." Susan's address is 14476 Eagle Pointe Drive, Clearwater, FL 33762 and phone (727) 641-1332.

Don Williams, the son of **Leonard F. Williams, 65th Squadron, Photographer** has become an Associate Member. Don's address: 2068 Fran Drive, Las Cruces, NM 88007-0833, phone (575) 525-1475. Don, who is a retired Captain writes: "I served two tours in Vietnam. First tour (1967-1968) was as a pilot of UH-1D (Huey Helicopter). Second tour (1970-1971) as a pilot of AH-1G (Cobra Attack Helicopter). I have over two thousand combat hours and was awarded three DFC, 78 Air Medals among other medals."

Don included a page from General Order No. 80 dtd May 8, 1943. The page is included as an attachment to this newsletter. The GO describes the combat activity which resulted in his father being awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Flo Ann Sogaard, daughter of **Folmer J. Sogaard, 63rd Squadron, Pilot** has become an Associate Member. Sadly, Flo reports the death of her father July 17, 2008. Her complete report is in MEMORIALS. Folmer was the Commanding Officer of the 63rd Squadron for several months. He and his crew brought the B-17F S/N 42-24520 "FIGHTING SWEDE" to Australia and joined the 63rd in August 1942.

An e-mail from **Greg Butler**, **Bob Butler's** son reports that Bob has had a bad fall and a minor heart attack in September. He is recovering and would appreciate hearing from his 43rd friends. Bob's daughter-in-

law gives us this update: "We have been working hard since then to get him out of nursing care and back into his apartment living at the Lodge Retirement Community. Last week he happily returned to an apartment in assisted living. We were hoping things would go well from there, but then this Tuesday (Dec. 9) he fell and bumped his head. This sent him back to the hospital. He is currently still there as they want to watch him recover from mild bleeding on the brain. I talked with his doctor today (Dec.10) and she seemed optimistic for a good recovery.

Thanks again for asking, he dearly loves his bomb group!"

Margaret Butler

Jim Cherkauer reports a new address for **Frank Hohmann, 65th Squadron, Flight Engineer:**
Cottage 66, Meadow Lakes, Hightstown, NJ 08520. Phone (609) 426-6236

After **Sam Commons** wrapped-up his tasks for the Atlanta Reunion, he entered the hospital for knee replacement surgery. The following is his report of this activity:

November 8, 2008-"After two weeks in the hospital following my double knee replacement, I am finally in rehab! It seems like every time the hospital requested a test, there was some other concern for them to explore in more detail. I am now walking a small, increasing amount each day. I also have a machine that bends my knees to increase their flexibility, and even works when I am asleep. They expect that I may stay in rehab for at least 10 more days, possibly longer, before I am sent home."

December 6, 2008-"First, a thank you to the many who have sent cards or called on the phone. I was delighted to know that I had so many good friends!

I came home yesterday after six weeks in the hospital and rehab. It is wonderful to be home and seeing my children and grandchildren. My knees are recovering beautifully, and I have NO PAIN whatsoever. I am certainly glad that I had both knees done, and I am looking forward to being back on the golf course in the spring. I am very thankful for the help my children and their faithfulness in visiting and caring for me. I have never appreciated them more"

Sam Commons

*****MEMORIALS*****

A note from **Marlys Fairbanks** and an e-mail from **Max Axelsen** reports: "**Neil Fairbanks, 403rd Squadron**, 92 years of age, an original member of the Group, made his "last flight" October 16, 2008 at Anoka, MN. Neil flew with my crew a few times and we had frequent contact when I lived in Minneapolis between wars. I will send a floral bouquet in behalf of our Group for his service if I obtain more specifics in time."

A letter from **Shirley Vorse**, widow of **Boyd Vorse, 63rd Squadron**, informed of the May 21, 2008 death of **Julian P. Stewart, Radio/Gunner**. He was 93 and is the last of the crew to pass on.

"I do enjoy the newsletters and quips. Thanks for all your effort to keep the news current. God Bless All."

Sincerely, Shirley Vorse

An e-mail from **Maggie Browne** by the way of **Jim Thompson**: "I have received from time to time correspondence from the 43rd Bomb Group Assoc. I guess my father, **William M. Browne, Jr, 64th Squadron, Gunner** was a member. I thought you should know that he passed away in his sleep June 6 this year. You may want to make note of that and discontinue mailing the newsletter."

Thanks, Maggie Browne

Via an e-mail from "**Bud**" **Lawson, Marcia Darcey**, reports the May 3, 2008 death of **George R. Stahl, 403rd Squadron, Flight Engineer**.

The following letter, dated July 28, 2008, was enclose with my October Newsletter package from Elain. "Dear Family and Friends,

I am writing to tell you of the death of my Father, **Folmer Sogaard, 63rd Squadron, Pilot**. Our family will miss him very much. He died peacefully shortly after his 93rd birthday. He was never quite himself after

the death of my Mother and he was really unhappy about not being able to drive. He however was still a great one with a story and the old dry wit was always there. He lived to know six great grandchildren.

He was buried last week with full military honors provided by personnel from McCord Air Force Base. He would not have wanted all the attention but we thought he deserved it.

I have enclosed the program from the funeral service and his obituary. I can be contacted at 11700 Leesville Rd., Raleigh, NC 27613, phone (919) 518-2581 if you would like any additional information."

Sincerely yours, *Flo Ann Sogaard Bolton*

FOLMER JENSEN SOGAARD LT. CO. USFA RET



Centralia- Folmer Jensen Sogaard died July 17, 2008 in Centralia, WA. He had just celebrated his 93rd birthday. Folmer Sogaard was born in Tilden, NE, on May 23, 1915, the son of Niels Sogaard and Annie Jensen Sogaard. Folmer was the oldest of ten children. The Sogaard family worked to make a living farming in Nebraska and later moved to a Danish community in Solvang, CA where he attended the Ballard School. Niels returned to his native Denmark arranging passage for Annie and the kids as money became available. Back in Denmark, Folmer worked on various farms during the day for four years to support his family and save money, going to school in the evenings. He returned to Solvang in 1935 and lived with Al and Sadie Madsen where he worked as a ranch hand. He graduated from Santa Ynez High School in 1939 and enrolled in pilot training school and was commissioned as a 2nd Lt. in the US Army Air Corp in 1940.

Lt. Sogaard was assigned to the Fifth Air Force, 43rd Bombardment Group, 63rd Bomb Squadron, Port Morsby, New Guinea where he served as a Command Pilot for 18 months. Folmer was the pilot of the Boeing built B-17 which was named the "Fighting Swede" in honor of him. In his book "Skip Bombing", James Murphy said "Lieutenant Folmer Sogaard the Swede, weighed about 118 pounds, dripping wet. He looked mild mannered but was a fierce competitor, as the enemy soon learned". Major Sogaard received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters. The 29-year-old pilot was a veteran of 56 combat missions logging 200 hours of combat flying in the Southwest Pacific. Following the war he separated from the Army and received a commission in the newly created US Air Force as a LTC in 1947.

In 1944, the then Lt. Sogaard met a young Marine Sgt., Florence Ellen Toothaker, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. J.E. Toothaker of Centralia. They were married in 1945 and had three daughters. The young family pursued Folmer's military career traveling widely in Europe and the United States. He retired from the Air Force and in 1960 they returned to Centralia where Folmer became the Manager of the Centralia Chamber of Commerce.

Folmer was a tireless promoter of Centralia and its business community, loved

to organize parades, and decorate for Fiesta days. He worked selflessly to improve his community by planting rhododendron gardens and the arboretum in Fort Borst Park, as a member of the Centralia Rotary he worked to build Riverside Rotary Park and served on the Dike Commission. Folmer always loved to garden, grew the best corn in the Twin Cities, raised cattle and horses on his "Ranch". He became an expert in the growing and propagation of rhododendrons. He was an energetic member of the Rhododendron Society. He met with his friends and business associates at the Coffee Klatch everyday, except Sundays, for more than 45 years.

Folmer enjoyed hiking, fishing, photography and the music of the "Sons of the Pioneers". His family and friends loved his dry wit and sense of humor. He was a lifelong Republican who feared that all of his grandchildren were Democrats. He was a member of the First United Methodist Church. Following his retirement he and Florence traveled widely visiting friends and family across the country including the 43rd Bomb Group reunions, and built a vacation home at Grayland, WA.

He is preceded in death by his wife of 59 years Florence Ellen.

He has continued to be surrounded by his family including his daughters Flo Ann Bolton and husband

Worth of North Carolina; Cheryl Sogaard of Hawaii; and Cathy Hedge and husband Mike of Centralia. His grandchildren Kim Hoppin and her husband Christopher; Jason Hedge and his wife Tammy; Jennifer Hedge and her husband Jason Pollock; Kane Hall and his wife Claudia; and Tyler Hall. A new generation of great grandchildren includes Emma June Hoppin; Cole Douglas Hedge and Benjamin Soren Hedge; Finnegan Christopher Hall and Fisher Joseph Hall; and Chloe Jensen Hedge. The family also includes his sister-in-law Jo Toothaker, his nieces Sally Campbell and husband Scott and their children Lauren and Cray; and Margaret Ann Kindley and her husband Roger. Folmer is also survived by four sisters, three brothers, and many nieces and nephews living in Denmark.

Viewing will be held at Newell-Hoerling's Mortuary on Monday, July 21st from 2-5 PM.

A service to celebrate the life of Folmer Sogaard will be held at Newell-Hoerling's Chapel, 205 West Pine Street, Centralia on Tuesday, July 22nd at 11 am. Burial services will follow at Sticklin Greenwood Memorial Park, 1905 Johnson Road. A reception for family and friends will follow at Kitchen #2, Fort Borst Park.

Please sign the guest book at www.legacy.com/ehonline

*****43rd HUMOR*****

For the Ladies

An efficiency expert concluded his lecture with a note of caution. "You don't want to try these techniques at home." "Why not?" asked some body from the audience.

"I watched my wife's routine at breakfast for years," the expert explained. "She made lots of trips between the refrigerator, stove, table and cabinets, often carrying a single item at a time. One day I told her, "Hon, why don't you try carrying several things at once?"

"Did it save time?" the guy in the audience asked. "Actually, yes," replied the expert. "It used to take her 20 minutes to make me breakfast. Now I do it in seven."

From the Church

A minister was completing a temperance sermon. With great emphasis he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river!" With even greater emphasis he said, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river!" And finally, shaking his fist in the air, he shouted, "And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river."

Sermon complete, he sat down. The song leader stood very cautiously and announced with a smile, nearly laughing, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn #365, "SHALL WE GATHER AT THE RIVER!"

Why don't Arizona have Daylight Saving Time?

The state of Arizona listened to the Wise Old Indian....When told the reason for daylight saving time the old Indian said, "Only a white man would believe that you could cut a foot off the top of a blanket and sew it to the bottom of a blanket and have a longer blanket!"

From Nick Arabinko, 64th Pilot

For all of us who are seniors - for all of you who know seniors - and for all of you who will be seniors. It pays to be able to laugh about it when you are! And, speaking of senior moments:

"WHERE is my SUNDAY paper?" The irate customer calling the newspaper office loudly demanded, wanting to know where her Sunday edition was.

'Ma'am,' said the newspaper employee, 'today is Saturday. The Sunday paper is not delivered until tomorrow, on Sunday.' There was quite long pause on the other end of the phone, followed by a ray of recognition, as she was heard to mutter, "Well, sxxx.....so that's why no one was at church today!"

*****INFORMATION*****

This newsletter is published four times a year - **January, April, July and October**. Please send **membership applications and dues payments to Elain Pierce, P.O. Box 84, Snyder, TX 79549**. Please keep in mind that annual dues are **\$20.00 per year** and life membership is **\$100.00**. Please make the check to the **43rd Bomb Group Association**.

Send items for the **Newsletter to Ed Gammill at 5415 E. Osborn Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85018-6106** or via e-mail to **Edgammill@aol.com**. Any material receive after the 15th of the month prior to a publication month probably will not appear in that publication.

The Postal Service **will not forward** this newsletter. If you change your address please **notify Ed Gammill** at the address shown above. Send all changes of phone

numbers, etc. also.

*****REUNION INFORMATION*****

Max Axelsen has established September 23 through 26, 2009 as the date for our next reunion in San Antonio, TX. The work on finalizing entertainment, speakers, programs and cost is continuing. Initial data is included in the Attachments. More information will be included in the April Newsletter.

*****ATTACHMENTS*****

- 1-2009 Reunion planning information (5 pages)
- 2-The completion of Randal J. Sobotka's diary (pages 19-31)
- 3-Page 13 of General Order No. 80, Fifth Air Force, May 8, 1943
- 4-History of "Pluto II" loss and crew internment (Pacific Wreck Database)

It's reunion time!!

We will convene once more in San Antonio...23 -thru - 26 Sept. 2009. Our Association was established at this fair city back in 1981. It is appropriate that we return for one of our final reunions in the city that was the beginning of our Association in 1981. The interest of Bob Butler and others, created an Association that has endured over the many years. Hopefully, we can once again convene and enjoy the friendships and comradship that has been a part of this fine organization. Our numbers are falling off significantly, but we hope you can join us for another festive occasion.

Other than a hotel contract, planning is incomplete. We will quartered at the Holiday Inn - Riverwalk, and the rate is about the same as at Atlanta.... \$127.25/day. They have just 313 rooms, but will insure that we can all be taken care of!! All of the relative information will be presented in our April newsletter. Most timely...don't you think?...since then you can take your income tax refund and plan on your trip to San Antonio!!

Enclosed is a list of some of the highlights in San Antonio. There's so much to do & see that you may wish to come early and stay late. We will have a couple nice tours. One to Lackland AFB to attend the graduation parade of "Airmen/Women Warriors", then on to Mission San Jose. This is known as the "Queen of Missions" and is an example of Spanish Colonial architecture. Next stop...the Alamo, the Shrine of TX Liberty. The most visited historical place in Texas. The battle fought there in 1836, changed the lives and attitudes of the Texans. On to San Fernando Cathedral, the Spiritual Center of San Antonio for over 200 years and is the oldest cathedral in the U.S. A driving tour of downtown & then back to the hotel.

Another tour: Visit the Institute of Texas Cultures wherein the many exhibits display the many cultures that make up the Texans. Next, a boat

ride on the San Antonio River. After lunch on your own, we visit the Mexican Market where you may enjoy shopping in the largest and oldest Mexican Market in the U.S.

All the attractions of San Antonio should entice you to come around and spend time with your friends in this delightful city. NOW PLAN ON IT!

Again, our April newsletter will present all the relative information. Schedules, programs, entertainment, costs, etc.

Hope to have y'all with us!

Blessings. Max & Margaret Axelsen