



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



## NEWSLETTER 113<sup>th</sup> EDITION JANUARY 2010

### PRESIDENT

ELDON "BUD" LAWSON  
23942 WOLF ROAD  
BAY VILLAGE, OH  
44140-2857  
440-871-9538

### VICE PRESIDENT

ARVID J. HOUGLUM  
3820 LONDON RD-201  
DULTH, MN  
55804-2233  
218-525-0021

### TREASURER

ROGER G. KETTLESON  
109 HUNTLY  
LAS VEGAS, NV  
89145-1515  
702-363-2824

### SECRETARY

EDWARD L. GAMMILL  
5337 E. EARLL DR.  
PHOENIX, AZ  
85018-8045  
602-840-7101

### Headquarters Squadron

C. Fred McAllister (2011)

### 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron

Charles Rauch (2011)  
James C. Dieffenderfer (2010)

### 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron

Robert W. Cooper (2011)  
Charles F. McClenny (2010)

### 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron

James W. Eide (2011)  
Lehman C. White (2010)

### 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron

Robert P. Mangan (2011)  
Jack Strange (2010)

### Past Presidents

Robert Butler 1981-1984\*  
George L. White 1985-1987\*  
William H. Wilson, Jr. 1988-1991\*  
Dale F. Barr, Jr. 1992-1993\*  
Max Osborn 1994-1995\*  
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Max M. Axelsen 2000-2001  
Roger T. Kettleison 2002-2003  
Charles Rauch 2004-2005  
Jim Cherkauer 2006-2007  
James Thompson Jr 2008

\*=Deceased

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Happy New year to all you old "War Birds" and your families!

A new year always reminds us of the great historic events of recent years, and long past years. An example of one of the most significant events to all of us was the first flight of a powered aircraft by the Wright brothers at Kitty Hawk, December 17, 1903. It was just 38 years later, December 7, 1941, the date "that will live in infamy," that a massive sea and air attack at Pearl Harbor brought our country to war the next day. Air power had taken a giant step forward!

It should also be remembered that the war had begun over two years before, in September 1939 although years of isolationist politics had left this nation inadequately prepared for military intervention. That delay was de-ja-vu from World War I, as that war had begun in July 1914, but the United States Congress did not declare war until 6 June 1917, then our military was poorly prepared for military action.

The media currently often refers to the present conflict with terrorism as, "unpopular." That terminology is inane, and tends to further deny the American public truthful, unbiased information. Often this leads to the overuse of the term, dissent. Then the conclusions that the nation should withdraw from any conflict, and re-direct the dollar costs to other needs of society. This use of the word, dissent defies the very fact that any act of war is the essence of dissent. The ultimate dissent, of the people in history, resulted in the rebellion of the American Colonists to chose a leader such as George Washington to lead them to a full-fledged Revolution. But dissent prevailed throughout that conflict, as there were more American Colonists who bore arms with the British than with the American Patriots.

Then, what could exemplify dissent more than the Civil War? It is also known as "The War Between The States." That dissent originated in 1776, as soon as independence was gained. That armed conflict began 84 years later, after this country had become the richest nation on earth.

Then, just 54 years later, 1914, that World War I erupted, though it was another three years, 1917, before the United States entered that war. We all know that it was just 21 years after that, in 1939, that the festering wounds of a failed peace process resulted in the second World War. That war was brought to an end with the advent of the nuclear age—the atomic bomb! Sadly though, despite the terrible danger of nuclear holocaust, military conflict in the world continues and the manner of conduct of war mutates accordingly.

We could all hope that this miss-labeled term, "popular war" or "un-popular war" would become obsolete, replaced by a "Popular Peace." In short, I cannot conceive of the correct usage of the term, "popular war."

As the waning numbers of the airmen of the 43rd Bomb Group continues, it is hoped that the great effort and sacrifices could be more thoroughly understood by future generations, and that our various histories would contribute to further the cause of peace in this nation, and the world.

The character of those men, "Ken's Men," and their contributions in war and peace might be a basis for generations to come to learn this way of life. After performing their duties at war, those who survived worked to build the peace. They, once again, became engineers, farmers, ministers, lawyers, teachers, doctors, tradesmen and merchants, and most of all—citizens of a free nation!

But this country, and the world should not be continually swept into conflicts augmented by various forms of propaganda substituting for facts. There are still great lessons to be learned from the words of past great leaders. **Thomas Jefferson** said, "Democracy will succeed so long as we have a well-informed electorate." **George Washington** reminded, "Government is not reason, it is not eloquent, it is force. Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and a fearful master." Then in our times, **Barry Goldwater** said, "A government that is big enough to give you all you want is big enough to take everything you have."

We sure hope to see you all once again in Orlando in September.

*Eldon 'Bud' Lawson*

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

**"The history of the failure in war can almost be summed up in two words: too late. Too late in comprehending in deadly purpose of a potential enemy; too late in realizing the mortal danger; too late in preparedness; too late in uniting all possible forces for resistance; too late in standing with one's friends."**

*General of the Army, Douglas MacArthur*

New address for your secretary—Edward L. Gammill, 5337 East Earll Drive, Phoenix, AZ 85018-8045, phone (602) 840-7101.

Every quarter, **Elain** mails several hundred newsletters, so there must be very many active members of the association. As reported in the October 2009 Newsletter, a committee, chaired by **Vice President Arvid Houghlum**, has been created to investigate and propose a plan to discontinue the Association's activities when it is deemed necessary. Therefore, the committee requests the assistance of **all active members** in this objective. Please send your comments and recommendations to Arvid via US Mail or <[ARVID@aol.com](mailto:ARVID@aol.com)> e-mail.

**Jean Byne** sent a booklet of drawings by her deceased husband, **Arte**. This document will be on display in the Memorabilia Room during the 2010 Reunion. Arte's draft of his activities in the Air Force/43rd were included in the April and July 2009 Newsletters. Arte was a talented cartoonist, his display of service life in the booklet is excellent.

**Jeffrey Alden Harclerode** and his wife Julie have become Life Associate Members. Jeffrey is the son of **Alden L. Harclerode, 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Operations**. Jeffrey's address—3731 Avenue G1/2, Santa Fe, TX 77510, phone (281) 831-1131.

In a letter to **Elain, Ernest MacQuarrie** wrote: "I was a member, but I let it expire. Please accept this application for a Life Membership. Included is a copy of my missions with the 403<sup>rd</sup> (included as an attachment).

I served with the 43<sup>rd</sup> as a Radio/Gunner and was discharged as a T/Sgt in November 1945. Subsequently I went through flying school (Class 49A) in 1949. I served another 26 years as a Air Force Pilot. I retired in July 1975."

*Ernest L. MacQuarrie*

Welcome back! Ernest's address is 6903 Carnation Drive, Carlsbad, CA 92011, phone (760) 431-9710.

I received a letter from **Robert S. Lamond, 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Radio/Bomb**. Robert enclosed a check for his 2010 and 2011 dues (\$40.00). The check has been mailed to Elain.

A note from **Maxwell Meyers, 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron**, via Elain, "I enclose a check for \$20 to renew my membership. Also, would any of my old crew be current members of the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG association?" Maxwell listed his crew as follows: **Lt. Robert Colman, Lt. Clifford Swanson, F/O Robert Oliver, F/O Martin Gleason, Sgt. William Watson, Sgt. Morris Cohan, Sgt Lester Wheelock, Cpl. Maxwell Meyers, Cpl. Victor Sonka and Cpl. Paul Lane**.

I reviewed the 2005 Roster without results, if anyone has knowledge of these men please pass it on to [<MAXWELL.MEYERS@VERIZON.NET>](mailto:MAXWELL.MEYERS@VERIZON.NET)

A letter from **Michael Musumeci**, who lives in Queensland, Australia is seeking information concerning WWII aircraft crashes in Queensland. His letter is an attachment to this Newsletter.

In correspondence with **Mark Feldbin**, son of **Albert Feldbin, 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Jim Cherkauer** has received a photograph of the A-bombing of Nagasaki. The photograph was taken by their radio operator from the late **Kenneth Brown's** aircraft. The photo came via **Mark, Dan Brown and Rosemary Brown**. Jim is seeking their permission to share this with others. The photograph quality is very bad and Jim's attempts to enhance it have failed. It is a 43<sup>rd</sup> historic photo, with a 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron aircraft between Ken's aircraft and the mushroom shaped cloud. If Jim is successful in gaining permission, the photo will be included in a future newsletter.

November 20, I received an interesting letter from **Bob Sausville, 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Pilot**, in which, he tells of some of his adventures with a B-24 named "GERALDINE." The letter is an attachment to this newsletter. I think all KEN'S MEN will enjoy reading it.

**Max Axelsen** reported that **Nick Arabinko, 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Pilot** has been hospitalized and is presently being evaluated due to a problem with his eye sight. Nick is unable to see at this time. Max's report included—"I talked to Nick, he is very cheerful, feels wonderful, spirits are up, but he does not know what is ahead for him down the road." **Ken's Men**----Nick and Shirley need our support, prayers and best wishes.

**If the only prayer you said in your whole life was "Thank You" that would suffice.**

Meister Eckhart, German Theologian

\*\*\*\*\***HISTORIAN'S MESSAGE**\*\*\*\*\*

As historian of this association for several years, the objective of my role is to assemble the memorabilia and select and appropriate depository for the data. My interest to do this accrued from my life-long objective to learn more of the military service of my own ancestry. In pursuit of that objective, my interest has been deepened in the history of those various military events. It is exciting and rewarding to learn more of the details of their lives and achievements.

Researchers with similar goals have all experienced the frustrations, all too common, when finding photos with no names, dates, or places, and other incomplete data. Too often family members have purposely

destroyed letters and other items of information and historic significance due to the personal character of the content. These factors have inhibited our collection for the **43<sup>rd</sup> Archives**.

Our search for the best depository has been difficult. Many of the well-known museums, although maintaining some semblance of a library for research, are more directed to collect tangible artifacts for display. We must bare in mind that many millions have served in our recent wars and the task of recording, itemizing,

categorizing and cataloging data is enormous. It requires well trained, experienced and dedicated personnel to prevail over the alternative of simply trashing collections that appear too voluminous and burdensome. Also, the fiscal and physical resources of the facility may be limited.

For several months I have become interested in and impressed by the **Archival Resources of George Mason University** of Fairfax, Virginia. Those of you who attended the 2009 San Antonio, TX Reunion were introduced to the university's capabilities by their archivists. We learned that a collection of 43<sup>rd</sup> historic material had been established within the Gorge Mason Archives. The existing collection was donated by **Susan Lanson**, who attended the reunion. Susan's father was **Leonard Clark**, who was a **Commanding Officer of the 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron** in 1944. **Bob Vay and Michael La Vean**, with Susan Lanson, attended the reunion and Bob Vay made a visual presentation on the George Mason Archives. He is associated with the Division of Libraries, Special Collections and Archives.

As reported in the October Newsletter, the George Mason Libraries are most supportive of retaining the history of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group's participation in the Southwest Pacific area during World War II. They also expressed interest in hosting the 2011 Reunion in Fairfax, Virginia.

*Eldon 'Bud' Lawson*

\*\*\*\*\***MEMORIALS**\*\*\*\*\*

An E-mail from Jim Cherkauer reports the November 8, 2009 death of **Albert Feldbin, 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Bombardier**. It was reported by his son, Mark Feldbin, who is an Associate Member. Al had been battling prostate cancer for the past ten years.

In later correspondence with Jim, Mark gave additional information about his father, which follows:

"Dad lived all his 85 years (minus the war years) and is buried within a mile of the house where was born. He was once asked if he had ever lived anywhere besides Coxsackie. His reply was "Why would I have wanted to?" We had no wake as is customary in our religion. The hearse met us at the house and about 40 relatives followed it down the street, where he lived his entire life, to the cemetery on a bluff overlooking the Hudson River. There had to be 200 people waiting for us at the cemetery; classmates from 1942, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. We never actively practiced our religion, so we elected not to have clergy. My sister and I spoke as well as, dad's close friend of 50 plus years. By the time he was through everyone was smiling and laughing. Dad would have loved it. The hardest moment, for us was when mom, was presented with the flag on "behalf of a grateful Nation." It drove home the point for me of how fast his generation is disappearing. They gave so much, asked for nothing in return other than to get on with their lives. Thank you Jim.

*Mark Feldbin*

Also in the same E-mail Jim reported the October 21, 2009 death of **Joseph D. Howard, 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Bombardier**. This was reported by his son-in-law, **Mike Grace**. Mike said he has several photos and other materials that we may want for our archives. Jim gave Mike "Bud" Lawson's address and indicated that if he did not want to retain any of the material, he could send it to our historian.

An E-mail from "Bud" Lawson reported a telephone call, from **Bob Cooper**, informing of the death of **Jack M. Rusmisl, 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron, Bombardier**. Jack was Cooper's bombardier during their service with the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group.

An E-mail from "Bud" Lawson, in which, the granddaughter, of **Clair H. Black, 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, Bombardier**, reports that Clair has passed away.

Through many dangers, toils and snares,  
I have already come;  
'Twas Grace hath brought me safe thus far,  
And Grace will lead me home.

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

#### For Golfers

Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today, it's called golf

My favorite shots are the practice swing and the conceded putt. The rest can never be mastered. - Lord Robertson

Professional golf is the only sport where, if you win 20% of the time, you're the best.- Jack Nicklaus

The uglier a man's legs are, the better he plays golf. It's almost a law.-H.G. Wells

I was three over. One over a house, one over a patio and one over a swimming pool. - George Brett

Actually, the only time I ever took out a one-iron was to kill a tarantula. And I took a 7 to do that. -

Mickey Mantle

I never pray on a golf course. Actually, the Lord answers my prayers everywhere except on the course. - Billy Graham

#### From Bob George

The small town's Sheriff was also its veterinarian. One night the phone rang and his wife answered. An agitated voice inquired, "Is your husband there?"

"Do you require his services as a sheriff or as a vet?" the wife asked.

"Both! We can't get our dog's mouth open, and there's a burglar in it!"

#### Little Jonnie Again!

The teacher asked the class to use the word "fascinate" in a sentence. Molly put up her hand and said, "My family went to my granddad's farm and we saw his pet sheep. It was "fascinating"

The teacher said, "That was good, but I wanted you to use the word "fascinate" not "fascinating" Sally raised her hand. She said, "My family went to see Rock City and I was "fascinated." The teacher said, "Well, that was good Sally, but I wanted you to use the word "fascinate."

Little Jonnie raised his hand. The teacher hesitated because she had been burned by Little Jonnie before. She finally decided there was no way he could damage the word "fascinate," so she called on him for his offering.

Little Jonnie said, "My aunt has a sweater with ten buttons, but her tits are so big she could only fasten eight"

The teacher sat down and cried!

#### For All Old Men

An older, white haired man walked into a jewelry store one Friday evening with a beautiful gal at his side. He told the jeweler he was looking for a special ring for his girl friend. The jeweler looked through his stock and brought out a \$5,000 ring. The old man said, "No, I'd like to see something more special."

At that statement, the jeweler went to his stock and brought another ring. "Here's a stunning ring at only \$40,000" the jeweler said. The young lady's eyes sparkled and her whole body trembled with excitement. The old man seeing this said, "We'll take it."

The jeweler asked how payment would be made and the old man stated, "By check, I know you need to make sure my check is good, so I'll write it now and you can call the bank Monday to verify the funds and I'll pick the ring up Monday afternoon." he said.

Monday morning, the jeweler phoned the old man. "There is no money in that account!" "I know," said the old man, but let me tell you about my weekend!"

**All Seniors Aren't Senile!**

**From Jim Dieffenderfer (Jimme Dee)**

A man is stumbling through the woods totally drunk when he comes upon a preacher baptizing people in the river. The drunk walks into the water and bumps into the preacher. The preacher turns around and is almost overcome by the smell of booze. Whereupon he asks the drunk, "Are you ready to fine Jesus?" "Yes I am" replies the drunk, so the preacher grabs him and dunks him in the river. He pulls him up and asks the drunk, "Brother, have you found Jesus?" the drunk replies, "No, I haven't."

The preacher, shocked at the answer, dunks him into the water again, but for a bit longer this time. He pulls him out of the water and asks again, "Have you found Jesus, my brother?" The drunk again answers, "No, I have not found Jesus."

By this time the preacher is at his wits end so he dunks the drunk in the water again, but this time he holds him down for about 30 seconds. When the drunk begins kicking his arms and legs, the preacher pulls him up. The preacher asks the drunk again, "For the Love of God, have you found Jesus?"

The drunk wipes his eyes and catches his breath and says to the preacher. "Are you sure this is where he fell in?"

\*\*\*\*\***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 79550**. Please keep in mind that annual dues are **\$20.00 per year** and life membership is **\$100.00**. Please make the check to the **43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association**.

Send items for the Newsletter to **Ed Gammill at 5337 E. Earll Drive., Phoenix, AZ 85018-8045** or via e-mail to **Edgammill@aol.com**. Any material receive after the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to a publication month probably will not appear in that publication.

The Ken'sMen Web site address is: **www.kensmen.com**.

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.

\*\*\*\*\***ATTACHMENTS**\*\*\*\*\*

- 1-Ernest McQuarrie's mission log.
- 2-Bob Sausville's letter dated 12 November 2009.
- 3-Michael Musumeci's letter (2 pages)
- 4-William L. Jobe's War-Time Diary (13 pages)
- 5-Arrangement of the Coronado Springs Resort (2 pages)
- 6-Preliminary information concerning the 2010 Reunion
- 7-SIGN-UP-SHEET Please complete this form and mail it to Nancy Solomon!  
US Mail Address: 8971 Huntington Pointe Drive, Sarasota, FL 34238-3207  
E-mail <[nansolo.sra@gmail.com](mailto:nansolo.sra@gmail.com)>

Do this immediately, even if you are not firm in attending, but wish to participate, if possible, in this reunion. Remember you will have an opportunity to firm or cancel anytime until August. Nancy needs a head count for future planning and negotiations. **SO DO IT NOW**

- 8-"Give A Day - Get A Day" newspaper article.

Late breaking news from **Roland Fisher-SMOKIE ONE**, "I'm way behind-just got home-had surgery for a broken hip. Did not pay attention to airspeed, trying to walk in blinding sun and pranged!"

All wish you well **SMOKIE ONE** and admonish you to take it easy and recover, for you are our Chaplain and favorite Ken's Men.

RE AD 97 COMBAT EXPERIENCE

403rd Bomb Sq. (H) 403rd Bomb Sq. (H)

17c McKARRIE E.L.

NAME

RANK

ASN

LOS

MISS CUM	MISSION NO.	DATE	TARGET	COMBAT HOURS, CUM.	COMBAT POINTS ON HRS.	MISS DATA	MISS PTS.	TOT PTS. CUM.
1	CRT C	13-4-45	WEDDICK	5:00	1			
2	CRT C	14-4-45	ROBOUT	11:40	1			
3	CRT C	15-4-45	ROBOUT	11:30	2			
4	125-A-3	5-5-45	SHINGIKU	27:30	2			
5	131-A-4	11-5-45	TOSHIBA AID	39:45	1	A/A		1
6	134-A-5	14-5-45	HOZANTOWN	13:05	2			
7	139-A-5	15-5-45	HOZANTOWN	53:13	2			
8	141-A-1	27-5-45	FITTON	65:40	2	A/A		1
9	151-A-1	31-5-45	TAHARA TOWN	23:40	2	A/A		1
10	153-A-2	2-6-45	KIRKUN TOWN	51:55	2			
11	164-A-2	13-6-45	TAHARA HARB	90:20	2			
12	168-A-2	17-6-45	KIRKUN	100:20	2	19/M		1
13	170-A-2	19-6-45	KIRKUN	109:20	2	2/A		1
14	179-A-1	23-6-45	KOBI-BUJANA	116:00	2			
15	180-A-3	29-6-45	CANTON	125:20	2	INT NIE		3
16	201-A-1-D	28-7-45	KOBI-HARBOR	133:20	2	A/A INT NC		4
17	CRT C	16-4-45	WEDDICK	140:20	1			
18	213-C-1-D	1-8-45	NAGASAKI	147:30	1	A/A		1
19	219-A-1	2-8-45	TOSHI AID	155:30	2	Int		1
20	223-A-4	11-8-45	KIRKUN TOWN	162:30	2			

12 November, 2009

Bennington, VT

To: Ed Gammill  
5337 E. Earl Drive  
Phoenix, AZ 85018-8045

Hi Ed;

I am writing to you concerning an item in the most recent 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group newsletter. Greetings and felicitations from the Green Mountain State.

It is mentioned that Larry Hickey may be back at it and will do some work on all 43<sup>rd</sup> aircraft. Some few years ago I was told about information on the internet concerning one aircraft that I knew was incorrect. I was not overwhelmed, nor underwhelmed, maybe just a little whelmed by inaccuracy. So here's the story about B-24D call sign Zero Six Five.

I signed a ~~hand~~ receipt for this aircraft on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 1943 at Herrington, Kansas. Our first flights included an over water navigational training mission on the Gulf flying from Gulfport, Miss. On returning we made the mistake of flying too low over the umbrella studded tables lined up before the Edgewater Gulf Hotel. We thought it was hilarious.

But, it was just one rising turn to the down wind leg and a staff car was waiting. At that time we were a crew of the Knox Provisional Group. There was nothing provisional about the Full Colonel waiting by his staff car. Now you know, brand new yellow bar Lts. have little contact with Bird Colonels. We were for the most part herded by Capts. The Colonel said little. "I want that machine off my air patch by sundown. Go to Fairfield-Suisun. It's near San Francisco. Orders will follow".

We left Fairfield on 7 Aug. Hickam to Xmas, to Tutuila to Nandi to PDG then Amberly on 11 Sept. '43, took the airplane to Townsville the next day for "Combat MOD", never expected to see it again.

As a crew we caught a ride up to Port Moresby assigned to the 65<sup>th</sup> Sq. 43<sup>rd</sup> Gp. I was to be assistant Ops. Officer. A few weeks later Zero Six Five comes to the 65<sup>th</sup> and of course she was "ours". Soon after a shark mouth was painted on her and the crew chief asked me if I had a name I preferred. I said no, whatever he could come up with. He said "What's your wife's name?" I said, "Geraldine". He just walked away.

We flew all of our early missions in Zero Six Five until I became 65<sup>th</sup> Ops. Officer and the newer "J" series came in. They were a much better platform as lead ship. I became 65<sup>th</sup> Ops. Officer when Vern Stevens rotated. When I left in July the "Geraldine" was still in the 65<sup>th</sup>.

Just a note; the lady for whom the airplane was named is still with me. We are both 90 years of age and don't often look back, but for those who do God Bless. Beware! Information documented may someday be used in historical research.

Best wishes,

Bob Sausville  
Lt. Col. USAF Ret.

Note; dates and locations taken from Pilot's Form 5



Michael MUSUMECI  
P.O. BOX 37,  
RAVENSHOE  
Queensland Australia  
4888.

Dear 43rd Bomb Group Association

Hi, my name is Michael MUSUMECI and I am writing from Queensland Australia. I am seeking assistance, in trying to obtain information, copies of photos, diaries or any other information in regards to any aircraft crashes that have occurred during WWII in Queensland Australia.

It is hoped that this information will be collated compiled and put into a publication to remember the sacrifices of the crews to ensure they will be forever remembered.

I have also recently completed a book titled "Ironrange Airbase - Carved in the Cape York Jungle". I have a website that may want to inspect. [www.ironrangeairbase](http://www.ironrangeairbase). This book was also researched & brought about alot of many historical stories & events.

I am also attempting to track down two people.

1. Jane RICHARDSON - who is linked to a Master Sergeant Arthur RICHARDSON who has a number of photographs of the B17 crash at Marceba.

2. J. Jennings who had photos of a crashed Wirraway A20-289 which crashed & killed Frank Parton and Sergeant Blanch.

I hope you may be able to assist in my research. I really need your assistance in ensuring that the veterans families / victims can be recognised.

Many thanks

Mich Musumeci

P.O. Box 37,

RAVENSHOE Qld

4888.

**"Excerpts from William L. Jobe's War-time Diary"**1943

June 25 - After graduating from Radio Operators School (Truax Field, Madison, Wisconsin) and Aerial Gunnery School (Davis-Monthan Field Tucson, Arizona) I joined a newly-formed B-24 bomber crew at Biggs Field, El Paso, Texas.

OUR CREW

Pilot - 2/ Lt. Henry J. Domagalski  
 Co-Pilot - 2/Lt. Robert A Brennan  
 Navigator - 2/Lt. John J. Pezzoli  
 Bombardier - 2/Lt. Herbert J. Maxwell  
 Flight Engineer - T/Sgt. George M. Blegen  
 Asst Flight Engineer - S/Sgt. Charles Vanek  
 Radio Operator - T/Sgt. Robert O. Spindler  
 Asst Radio Operator/Gunner - S/Sgt. William L. Jobe  
 Left Waist Gunner - S/Sgt. Richard J. Faria  
 Tail Gunner - S/Sgt. Wayne K. Yates

- Sept 1 - Upon completion of crew training we arrived at Topeka, Kansas and take delivery of a new B-24 which we named "Pistol Packin' Mama."
- 3 - We fly to Hamilton Field near San Francisco.
- 7 - We take-off at 9:15 PM from Hamilton Field in "Pistol Packin' Mama." We land at Hickam Field, Honolulu, Hawaii near noon the next day after 15½ hour flight. With head-winds our average speed was about 155 mph.
- 11 - We land at Penrhyn Island. Nothing but an small atoll.
- 12 - We land at Nandi Field, Viti Levu Island, Fiji Group.
- 13 - We land at Plaines de Giaics, New Caledonia.
- 14 - We land at Amberly Field, Ipswich (Brisbane) Australia. "Pistol Packin' Mama" is taken for modifications.
- 15 - We arrive at Garbutt Field, Townsville, Australia.
- 21 - We arrive at Port Moresby, New Guinea. Assigned to to the 63rd Bomb Squadron, 43rd Bomb Group, 5th Air Force.
- Oct 11 - Mission #1 - We bomb Rabaul around midnight; carried two Colonels.
- 13 - Mission #2 - We fly Bismark Sea reconnaissance.
- 15 - Mission #3 - We fly Solomons Sea reconnaissance.
- 18 - Mission #4 - We fly Rabaul reconnaissance; carry Brigadier General Wurtsmith and a Colonel.  
 (These first four missions flown in B-17's, the rest were in B-24's.)
- Nov 1 - We were reassigned to the 64th Bomb Squadron.

- Nov 7 - Mission #5 - We fly Rabaul reconnaissance and spot two Japs sitting on a piece of wreckage in the sea, probably from a sunken ship. (The Pilot decides we should not strafe them altho we were ready to do so.)
- 11 - Mission #6 - We bomb Rabaul at 3:00 AM, a 5th Air Force "Maximum Effort" mission.
- 17 - Mission #7 - We bomb Sattelburg.
- 20 - Mission #8 - We bomb Gasmata.
- 24 - Mission #9 - We fly Bismark Sea reconnaissance in B-24 #913 named "Zombie." We are attacked by seven Zeros which were escorting eight Betty bombers which were returning from bombing near Finschhafen. They shot away some control tabs, started fires in the nose and tail sections destroying two parachutes, and wounded the Left Waist Gunner Faria in the head. We fought them off and made an emergency landing on a dirt strip at Lae. Over 100 holes in the B-24.
- 28 - Mission #10 - We bomb Wewak.
- Dec 1 - Mission #11 - We bomb Wewak.
- 4 - Mission #12 - We fly Cape Gloucester reconnaissance.
- 6 - Mission #13 - We bomb Cape Gloucester.
- 10 - We relocate from Port Moresby to Dobodura on the north side of New Guinea.
- 14 - Mission #14 - We bomb Arawe, New Britain.
- 15 - Allies invade Arawe, New Britain.
- 18 - Mission #15 - We bomb Cape Gloucester.
- 19 - Mission #16 - We bomb Cape Gloucester.
- 21 - Mission #17 - We bomb Cape Gloucester.
- 23 - Mission #18 - We bomb Cape Gloucester.
- 26 - Mission #19 - We bomb Cape Gloucester in direct support of the Allied invasion of Cape Gloucester.
- 29 - Mission #20 - We bomb near Cape Gloucester in support of the continuing invasion.
- 30 - Cape Gloucester Japanese air strip captured.
- 31 - Mission #21 - We bomb Alexishafen.

### 1944

(Beginning this year I kept a more detailed account in a diary I had bought while on leave in Australia.)

- Jan 2 - Mission #22, A/C #930, 4 hrs 50 min. Carried eight 500-lb bombs. Target: Jap-held cape in the Siador area preparing the way for another Allied invasion. Observed more than 50 battleships, cruisers, destroyers, barges, and PT boats. Marine landing craft dashing toward the shore, quite a sight!

- Jan 3 - Mission #23, A/C #090, 4 hrs 40 min. Carried six 1000-lb bombs. Target: Alexishafen heavy ack-ack gun emplacements. We missed and blew up an ammunition dump! Five large fires started---one big explosion---the ammo dump. Ack-ack medium but close to our element; some bombers hit. Zeros in the area. I operated the lower ball turret. Escort of P-38's and P-47's.
- 6 - Mission #24, A/C #116, 4 hrs 50 min. Carried six 1000-lb bombs. Target near Alexishafen with six heavy ack-ack gun emplacements on a narrow peninsula. Each plane made individual bomb runs. Ack-ack was heavy, concentrated, and at our altitude. Targets received good hits by us. Escort of P-38's.
- 8 - Mission #25, A/C #811, 6 hours. Carried eight 1000-lb bombs. Supposed to bomb concentration of Jap troops at Cape Gloucester but too much cloud cover. Secondary target: a Jap-held plantation at Bogadjim thought to contain ack-ack and/or coastal guns. Target was well hit.
- 18-25 - On leave in Sydney. I met an Aussie soldier in a Pub whose "Auntie" had a guest house ("Halley House") in nearby Mosman where I stayed.
- Feb 1 - Mission #26, A/C #913, "Zombie," 5 hrs 5 min. Awaken 0430 for strike on Wewak. It was called off but at 0830 we took-off for Garove Island in the Admiralty Group. Carried 4 tons of bombs. Rendezvoused at Cape Ward Hunt (as usual) and picked up escort of P-38's and P-47's. Had to turn back because of bad weather.
- 3 - Mission #27, A/C #814, 6 hrs 40 min. Awaken at 0500, ate and briefed at 0600. Target: Wewak airdrome. Took-off at 0800 carrying eight 1000-lb bombs. Escort of P-47's. Bombed from 17,000 feet. Ack-ack was intense but off to our right. Target well hit. Observed dogfight at a distance but no E/A got through to us. Heard later that 80 Jap planes were destroyed on the ground.
- 5 - Awaken at 0600, briefed 0645. Target: Kavieng airdrome on New Ireland, north of Rabaul. We took-off at 0830 but half-way down the runway an engine super-charger went out; we were indicating 105 mph but the Pilot managed to brake to a stop with smoking tires. (One following B-24 almost hit our tail!)

- Feb 6 - Mission #28, A/C #487, 4 hours. Target: Momote airdrome, Los Negros, Island, Admiralty Group. Carried 4 tons bombs. We led an element for our first time. Got half-way between target and Cape Gloucester when #2 engine began throwing oil; we had to return to base on three engines.
- 10 - Mission #29, A/C #930, 7 hrs 15 min. Carried 4 tons bombs. Escort of P-40's and P-47's. Target: Jap supply depot near Boram air strip, Wewak. Clouds covered most of target. Diverted to Madang and bombed at 13,000 feet. (Was surprised that no ack-ack firing at us. The gun emplacements had been knocked out.)
- 12 - Mission #30, A/C #684, 11 hrs 55 min. Took-off at 0630 with only two 500-lb bombs but plenty of fuel for long Bismark Sea reconnaissance. Flew north to the Admiralties; came back by Wewak and bombed a Jap-occupied village on southern coast of Kar Kar Island.
- 14 - Mission # 31, A/C #482, 6 hrs 55 min. Carried six 1000-lb bombs. Target: Kavieng air strip on New Ireland. We made a long approach to the runway and crossed it at a slight angle. Our bombs hitting the strip. Ack-ack was light and below us. Bombing altitude was 16,800 feet.
- 15 - Mission #32, A/C #484, 6 hrs 55 min. Carried six 1000-lb bombs. Target: Kavieng air strip. Escort of P-38's. Some cloud cover but our bombs hit the target. B-25's had strafed and bombed the harbor just before we arrived sinking a ship and setting another on fire. One B-25 was shot down. Ack-ack was medium, the right wing B-24 in our element was hit and had to feather #4 engine.
- 16 - Mission #33, A/C #487, 6 hrs 45 min. With no bombs aboard but lots of ammunition, we flew to "shadow" a Jap convoy north of Kavieng heading south. Found the convoy near a harbor at New Hanover. Two large destroyers, two cargo or troop ships, and another smaller ship. One destroyer fired ack-ack at us. A Jake (Jap twin-float fighter) spotted us and approached then turned away. A formation of six Zeros flew overhead but didn't attack---we got away by ducking in and out of clouds. Returning, we strafed a Jap-held village on Unea Island and I saw my tracers going into a large building. The Pilot let me fly the bomber for  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour on the way back.
- 20 - Mission #34, A/C #769, 6 hours. We bomb Hansa Bay area. (No details given.)
- 22 - Mission #35, A/C #482, 6 hrs 10 min. We bomb Rein Bay area. (No details given.)
- 24 - Mission #36, A/C #114, 4 hrs 35 min. We bomb Momote airdrome, Los Negros Island in the Admiralties. (No details given.)

February - About this time, I encountered a "Komodo Dragon" in the jungle. (It's not in my diary because others wouldn't believe me and, at the time, I really didn't know what it was.)

One evening I decided to explore a trail into the jungle behind our Mess Hall. I had walked about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile down the trail and as I rounded a turn I saw what looked like a huge lizard about 20-30 yards ahead of me. It stood about three feet high on thick legs with claw-like feet, had the sagging throat under the jaw like a lizard, must have weighted 150-200 pounds, and was about ten feet long! It was so big that I stopped, petrified in amazement---how could a "lizard" get that big??? We stared at each other about 5 seconds then it suddenly whirled around, and running with extraordinary speed for something so big, jumped on a large tree trunk and disappeared behind it. I ran back and told others in the crew but they either didn't believe me or thought I exaggerated.

Recently, National Geographic had a special on TV about "The Komodo Dragons." They were first reported in 1929 on the island of Komodo in eastern Indonesia. This TV documentary showed them running down cattle, jumping on their backs to bear them down and eating them alive! (Webster's Dictionary says: a giant, flesh-eating lizard of SE Asian jungles; it is the largest living lizard reaching a length of 9 feet.)

I am sure, now, that's what it was. After seeing on TV how they can attack and kill their prey I realize a terrible thing could have happened to me and, because I was alone in an isolated area, nobody might ever have known about it. I've often since thought how foolish I was to be in such a situation.

Feb 26 - Mission #37, A/C #482, 6 hrs 30 min. We bomb Wewak. (No details.) We had our crew picture taken in front of B-24 "Lucky Lucille."

27 - Mission #38, A/C #913 "Zombie," 6 hrs 15 min. We bomb Wewak. (My 20th birthday and here I am flying in "Zombie" again--are we "pushing our luck?")

Mar 1 - Mission # 39, A/C #930, 6 hrs 50 min. We bomb Momote airdrome, Admiralty Islands. (No details.)

3 - Mission #40, A/C #684, 5 hrs 20 min. We bomb Alexishafen. (No details.)

5 - Mission #41, A/C #487, 7 hrs 20 min. We bomb near Momote airdrome, Admiralty Islands. (No details.) Tonight we saw John Wayne, in person, who put on a USO show. Then we saw movie "In Old Oklahoma" starring the same.

- Mar 7 - Mission #42. A/C #090, 11 hrs 45 min. We fly Bismark Sea reconnaissance and bomb small island near Momote, Admiralty Islands. Faria and I toss several 20-lb fragmentation bombs out of the open camera hatch as fast as we can on the bomb run.
- 11 - Moved from Dobodura to Nadzab--over 200 miles. Set up our old leaky tent. No showers yet and very little drinking water. Chow of beans and coffee from a field kitchen. Mountains all around us. Place is full of A-20's, B-25's, P-38's, P-47's, P-40's, P-39's, C-47's, B-17's, B-24's.
- 12 - Couldn't get a better tent--have to make out with our old one. I flew with Lt. Gull, A/C #667 as Radio Operator to Dobodura and back hauling freight.
- 13 - Details, labor, work! Improved chow. No showers. Hot, dirty.
- 14 - Awaken at 0130 for a Special Mission. We were to lead an element of three B-24's as "fighter" escort for some PBY's (Catalinas) which were going to land troops on a small island 100 miles east of Hollandia to reconnoiter, later to be picked up. Mission would last about 12 hours. We were to stay in that area for hours. We naturally expected to meet Jap fighters from Hollandia or Wewak. As we turned on to the runway the mission was canceled.
- 15 - Mission #43, A/C #487, 5 hrs 20 min. Target: Hospital at Wewak--but it had 26 gun positions right around it! Target well hit. Ack-ack was medium, not as intense as has been. E/A reported airborne but I saw none of them. Hope we knocked out some of their damn ack-ack!
- 18 - Mission #44, A/C #913 "Zombie," 5 hrs 30 min. Target: Wewak ack-ack gun positions. (No details.)
- 21 - A B-24 of the 403rd Squadron, our Group, had to turn back from a mission with one engine feathered. As he approached for a landing he made the mistake of banking too steeply and crashed. The medics ran out and as they were on the wings trying to get to those inside, one of the engines caught fire and the plane exploded killing them all.
- 23 - A B-24 of the 90th Bomb Group ("Jolly Rogers") crashed killing everyone aboard.
- 24 - A B-25 exploded in the air after take-off. All that was to be seen from here was a big black, boiling cloud of smoke rising in the air. Strange, so many accidents happening these past few days. We started out at dawn this morning to bomb Wewak with each ship carrying sixteen 500-lb bombs. Mission was canceled because of weather as we were rolling along the taxiway. I hear that we will fly a Wewak mission tomorrow leading an element.
- 25 - Mission #45, A/C #484, 4 hrs 35 min. We led element bombing Wewak. Total combat time: 279 hrs 5 min.



- Mar 27 - Mission #46, A/C #484, 8 hrs 55 min. Landed at Saidor to refuel enroute to bomb Hollandia with incendiary and fragmentation bombs. Had two air-raid alerts here. Took-off at 0030 the morning of the 28th. Couldn't get through to Hollandia because of weather so we patrolled between Wewak and Finchhafen. Bombed Kar Kar Island near Wewak. Landed at Nadzab around dawn. Total time so far: 288 hours--nearly through!
- 31 - Mission #47, A/C #484, 12 hrs 20 min. Bismark Sea reconnaissance. Two 1000-lb bombs. Took-off at dawn. Bombed jetty on Kar Kar Island and strafed hell out of buildings, etc. on two runs on the island. I fired about 200 rounds from right waist gun. We succeeded in stretching this flight in order to get in our flying time to go home. We made it! I have a total of 300 hours 20 minutes. We all went on DNIF (Duty Not Including Flying).
- Apr 1 - Placed on DNIF. Altho this is April Fool's Day, I was no fool doing this! Lt. Papworth and crew crashed their B-24 on take-off this morning. It soon caught fire while they were struggling to free their tail-gunner who was trapped in the bombbay. The plane exploded its eight 1000-lb bombs killing him. The rest suffered shock and concussion. Absolutely no plane left.
- 3 - A B-24 of the 90 Group ("Jolly Rogers") exploded after crashing into a B-25 along the runway on take-off killing at least five of the crew. Explosion also wrecked another B-25 nearby. (It's getting god-damned rough!)
- 6 - Today--after we had put in our orders to go home--a new order came out stating that all airmen of the 5th Air Force would fly combat a minimum of one year and at least 300 hours. This means that sometime in September we'll be eligible to go home--we should have about 600 hours logged by then--if we aren't killed first! We expected to be home in May! (We were scheduled and alerted to fly today but the mission was canceled because of weather.)
- 7 - Awaken at 0430 again this morning to fly. Mission canceled because of weather.
- 9 - Mission #48, A/C #811, 6 hrs 5 min. We bombed ack-ack positions at Hansa Bay below Wewak. The 65th Squadron lost a B-24. We saw it going down in a tail-spin to crash in the sea. No parachutes seen. (Lt. Taylor and crew.)
- 10 - Mission #49, A/C #484, 6 hours. We bombed Hansa Bay again. The 90th Group lost a B-24 from ack-ack. Five crew members were seen to bail out over land--maybe they're eating rice and raw fish courtesy of the Japs by now.

- Apr 11 - Mission #50, A/C #166, 5 hrs 20 min. We led the 64th Squadron and bombed Hansa Bay. We lost an A-20 and a B-24 to ack-ack.
- 12 - The 90th Bomb Group lost B-24 "Yankee Doodle Dandy" over Hollandia.
- 16 - Big Allied raid on Hollandia. Weather turned very bad. We lost 6 B-24's, 17 medium bombers, and 23 fighters! One of our new crews didn't come back. (This day became known as "Black Sunday.")

- "AVIATION HISTORY"  
MAGAZINE, MARCH 1991 -

Northeast New Guinea, April 16, 1944—The U.S. Army Air Forces' Fifth Air Force suffered a crushing loss to a massive New Guinea weather system in an incident that came to be known as "Black Sunday." By March 1944, Allied strategy in the southwest Pacific had focused on neutralizing the Japanese at Hollandia. The Fifth Air Force struck repeatedly from bases around Nadzab and the Markham Valley, systematically destroying Japanese air power. April 16 was to be the last Allied air raid. Threatening weather delayed the start of the mission, but the raid was successful as 300 Allied aircraft inflicted further damage on Japanese targets while suffering no losses. Turning for home, the armada, already anxious about fuel consumption, encountered towering thunderheads and rain that blocked their entrance to the Markham Valley. Over hostile jungle and with mountains on either side, the only route to safety was through the storm. In the swirling turbulence, 37 planes and 54

airmen were lost as pilots ditched, crashed and force-landed in the jungle.

- Apr 18 - Alerted for 0800 take-off to bomb Hansa Bay's "Best Ack-ack in the Southwest Pacific." Mission was canceled because of weather. Whee!
- 19 - Left on (well-deserved) furlough to Sydney via Port Moresby, Townsville, and Brisbane.
- 21-28 - On leave in Sydney. Again stayed at Halley Guest House in Mosman across the harbor from Sydney.
- 30 - Got back to Nadzab via Townsville and Port Moresby.
- May 1 - Hear that we will move somewhere soon. All leaves to Australia (Sydney) are canceled from now on. Learned that 1st Lt. Domagalski is now a Captain!
- 3 - Faria came in tonight, 3 days late. I hear that he will be reduced to Private. Now I'm glad I didn't stay overtime. Spindler hasn't showed up yet.

- May 5 - Spindler got back tonight. He will soon be a Private, too. Today I went to code practice at Group and was surprised to discover that I can take 14 words per minute after all this time without practice.
- 8 - Lt. Terpning and crew failed to return from today's mission and is believed lost.
- 9 - A search mission went out today looking for Lt. Terpning's plane but there were no sightings.  
A B-25 dove into the side of a mountain close by and exploded. A streak of fire could be seen from here.
- 11 - Personnel has ~~has~~ typed up citations for the Silver Star for our crew activities on the November 24th flight. Orders also submitted for Air Medals with two Oak Leaf Clusters for flying 300 combat hours.
- 15 - Mission #51, A/C #814, 6 hours. We were supposed to lead the entire 43rd Group in the 64th's new deluxe B-24 #814--the Flagship! After we took-off a 90th Group's ship crashed and burned. We circled the area several times but our "followers" failed to form up with us and went on to the primary target, Sarmi. We bombed the secondary at Wewak. Our bombs (twenty-four 250-lb bombs) hit in a supply dump starting two very big fires with explosions--possible oil dump.
- 16 - We are alerted to fly a long one tomorrow. A B-25 blew up yesterday. A B-24 flew over here with one wheel down and the other wheel up. Since they were stuck in that position, the pilot set the Automatic Pilot and everyone bailed out. We watched them float down. And so, the 90th lost another B-24!
- 17 - Mission #52, A/C #006, 10 hrs 30 min. All B-24's carried five 1000-lb bombs and 3100 gallons of gas: gross weight 64,000 lbs! We led the second element. Took-off at 0700 for Biak Island to bomb a supply and personnel area. Our bombs touched off a gas dump causing many other fires and explosions. There were about 20 large fires and the black smoke covered the airdrome area rising to approximately 7,000 feet. Best results I've ever seen!
- 21 - I went to Group Photography for a short course in aerial cameras. Am now supposed to be able to operate four different types of cameras.
- 22 - Our new Squadron insignia was finished and hung over the road. It shows an Indian looking through a telescope sitting on a bomb. At the top is 64th Bomb Squadron; underneath is "Pride of the Air Force."
- 24 - Flew on a practice bombing mission (A/C #811) as the Photographer with Domagalski, Maxwell, Blegen, Pezzoli and two other Bombardiers. Took 16 pictures of 16 100-lb practice bombs dropped on small island near Finschhafen. Flight lasted 3½ hours. The "Articles of War" read tonight by Capt. Houser.
- 27 - Mission #53, A/C #006, 10 hrs 45 min. At dawn, large U.S. forces (including Cruisers, etc.) landed on Biak Island. We dropped six 1000-lb bombs on Jap personnel.

- May 29 - We got two new crews today. That's helpful-- maybe we will soon be sent back to the U.S. After all, we are the oldest complete crew in the squadron!
- 30 - A/C #006, 9 hrs 30 min. We were supposed to give support to our ground troops at Biak by bombing counter-attacking Japs. Weather was closed over at Biak and our home base so we all had to land at Los Negros Island for the night. This used to be one of our targets but had been captured by U.S. They have repaired Momote and Lorengau air strips and have built two new strips. Lots of Navy there. A Base for Catalinas, 13th Air Force and some of 7th Air Force there too. Everything well built-up---all new equipment. Saw some Jap prisoners. Trees shredded from gun fire and bombs.
- 31 - Took-off for "home" this AM---arrived back at noon. 2½ hour flight.
- Jun 3 - Convoy of large Jap forces including battleships, cruisers, etc etc and perhaps as many as four aircraft carriers sighted 200 miles south of the Philippines believed headed for Biak Island. Approximately 60 ships as estimated. Big battle brewing!
- 4 - Many of our planes took-off to bomb the convoy this morning---we were not scheduled. Everyone is listening in at Communications for every report. Just heard that the 403rd Squadron has been jumped by Jap fighters. We're alerted to fly from midnight on. Little nervous. (Did I say "Little?")
- 5 - Mission #54 (OUR LAST COMBAT MISSION!), A/C 006, 10 hours 10 minutes. We took-off at 0630 to bomb Jap troops on Biak Island. (All the time we thought we would go out to bomb the Jap convoy but it had turned back 40 miles north of Manokwari, New Guinea.) We lost A/C #991 yesterday when Lt. Petty ran out of gas and landed in the sea. On the way to Biak, two in our formation turned back. The four of us hit our target. Weather was bad on the return. We now have a total of 358 hours, 40 minutes combat. We all got drunk tonight.
- 6 - At our evening movie the wonderful announcement was made that Allied forces had crossed the English Channel and successfully landed near Charbourg, France against (unexpected) slight resistance! Paratroopers landed in Normandy. More good news: the Allies took Rome! Bad news: When A/C #991 of our squadron went into sea yesterday we were led to believe that Lt. Petty's crew were all rescued. Word came in that all were lost.
- 7 - I learned that Petty's navigator was the same guy (Katzen) who has been giving us the news at the 1300 Hours meetings. The Bombardier (Lt. Bohman) was the guy who was always smoking a pipe. I flew with him on the last bombing practice.

- Jun 9 - This morning Jap shipping was sighted up north so now we find ourselves on Alert. Later--- the shipping turned back after one destroyer was sunk, one left in a sinking condition, and two others on fire. From reports of sightings recently, there's a lot of Jap Navy in and around the Halmerhera's.
- 10 - We were paid tonight. I received 53 Pounds for two month's pay. Deposited 75 Pounds in the Squadron safe.
- 11 - Heard a rumor that there'll soon be a landing on Guam and Paleau islands. Our bombers are supposed to hit Paleau tonight at 0130 from the Admiralties.
- 13 - Learned tonight that Capt. Domagalski, Brennan, Pezzoli, Blegen and Spindler are to fly down to Milne Bay to bring back some men and supplies. Since I've never been to Milne Bay before and wanted to see what's down there, Spindler will let me fly in his place as Radio Operator.
- 14 - Got off at 1000. Arrived at Milne Bay around noon. Milne Bay is just a big coconut plantation--the largest grove in the world. The runway was only 6800 feet long--we nearly burnt out our brakes, the tires were still smoking after we parked. Colonel Lindbergh was there altho we didn't get to see him. A C-54 landed--huge plane! Chow was terrible. We were all issued a blanket and I slept on boards in the bombbay.
- 15 - Woke at 0600. Ate a lousy breakfast. Watched the C-54 take-off. Heard that Lindbergh had refused to fly north in a B-24, preferring a C-47! We loaded up with supplies and 15 passengers. Took-off at 0900. When we landed back at base someone told us that Lt. Duvall and crew, flying A/C #811 "Uncle Sam," had exploded in mid-air as they were flying as "Pathfinders" to Yap Island. We would have flown in their place if we hadn't gone to Milne Bay! Now, we are alerted to fly as "Pathfinder" to Paleau tomorrow night. Will fly old "Zombie" #913 with 250-lb bombs and some flare bombs. Br-r-r-r!!
- 16 - Instead of #913, we flew #062, "Flamin' Mamie" up to Makerang Field, Los Negros in the Admiralties. Carried 20 clusters of fragmentation bombs, six 20-lb bombs per cluster---plus four flares. Ate supper at a SeaBees camp. For some reason the mission was canceled to our great relief! We had to sleep in the plane--me in the nose. Still on alert for a mission tomorrow.
- 17 - Colonel Hawthorne was to lead us over Paleau and we were to circle the target dropping flares and transmitting radio signals for others to "home" on for 20 minutes! Thank God this mission was canceled too! (Paleau was a Jap fighter base.)
- 18 - We left Los Negros at 0800 and landed back home at 1030.

- Jun 20 - Spindler and I were on K.P. today. Ten crews were alerted to bomb Noemfoor Island northwest of Biak Island. Since we were on K.P. Sgt. May will fly in Spindler's place and Sgt. Richter in my place. This will be the first time I've ever missed a flight scheduled for our crew!
- 21 - Ten of our B-24's took-off to hit Noemfoor Island this morning. Two or three turned back because of mechanical failures. The rest bombed Noemfoor in bad weather and ran into very bad weather on their return. Some landed at Hollandia, two ships landed at Tadjelinding including our crew, and others at Saidor, Finchhafen, and even Wakde Island!
- 22 - Domagalski told us today that he might soon be leaving for the States to see his sick mother. He wanted to know if we wanted to be grounded so now everyone is, except Yates and myself.
- 23 - Heard the wonderful news that 61 combat men would soon be sent back to the States because of a surplus in the Group. This will include us altho we've been overseas only 9 months and not a year yet. Orderly Room is busy typing up our orders now! At the officer's tent we had a celebration feast---Blegen, on K.P. today, managed to get 8 fresh (?) eggs and we ate egg and cheese omelets with crackers.
- 25 - A dull day.
- Jul 1 - Heard the rumor from Blegen that our orders will be back tomorrow! Faria and I got a couple of flutes and after learning "Old Black Magic" we did some close harmonizing.
- 3 - Heard the rumor that our orders were just signed by 5th Bomber Command and sent down to Brisbane to be OK'd by 5th Air Force. Incidentally, there is no longer a 5th and 13th Air Force. The two have been combined into the Far East Air Force. I flew a 2½ hour test hop with Capt. Shankel this AM. Gave the camp a good "buzz job." Was paid my 28 Pounds for June.
- 4 - I flew another 2½ hour instrument check flight with Capt. Shankel to get in my minimum flying time of four hours this month in order to get that extra 50% flying pay.
- 5 - The order came this morning that the 64th would move to an island just south of Biak. However, our crew will remain here since we expect to get our orders any day now. The Administration building was torn down almost immediately--so were the Dispensary, Communications. All electric wires are down. Spindler, Vanek, Yates, and I loaded tent stakes and poles on a truck. Lt. Russell's crew, next tent, took theirs down and moved in with us.
- 6 - We turn in to Supply our gas masks, 45's, ammunition, shoes, old clothes, etc etc.

- Jul 7 - I was given the Air Medal ribbon--am supposed to get the medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters later. Also got orders for the Good Conduct Medal. We're leaving for Port Moresby in the morning!! Ray!
- 8 - Got up at 0400 and packed. Took-off at 0800 in a C-47. Checked in at the 268th Replacement Depot. Saw a P-47 do a wheels-up emergency landing. Only damaged the prop and underside. Issued one blanket. Good food here. Wonder how long we'll have to "sweat it out?"
- 9 - 27 - "Sweating It Out" at Port Moresby. Visited our old encampment nearby and was chased out by a pack of "Dingos" (Australian for wild dogs). Stayed several nights at the "Moresby Hotel" and enjoyed good food. Met a "Jolly Roger" (90th Group) man at the NCO Club. He was one of the crew that we watched bail out over our area last May 16th. Since then he said they became lost on another mission and he bailed out and landed in the water east of Saidor. The rest of his crew were never found. He's going home after only 116 hours.
- 24 - Must turn in this diary to the Censors. Probably won't see it again until after the war. (FINIS)

(On July 28th, we left New Guinea from Milne Bay aboard the "Willard A. Holbrook," formerly the "President Taft." After sailing 19 long, zig-zagging, sea-sick days, we sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge at San Francisco on August 15th. We then transferred from "Holbrook" to Angel Island in the Bay for further "processing" before going on Leave and Reassignments. All of our crew, who had been so close together in our times of hardships and peril, were scattered to other Air Force Bases.)