

43RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC.

"KEN'S MEN"



PRESIDENT

SAMUEL F. COMMONS
43rd Bomb Group Assoc.
2003 Grace Lane
Flourtown, PA 19031-1709

VICE PRESIDENT

MAX M. AXELSEN
43rd Bomb Group Assoc.
8406 Dorsetshire St.
San Antonio, TX 78250-2444

TREASURER

WILLIAM H. WILSON, Jr.
43rd Bomb Group Assoc.
PO Drawer M-360
Snyder, TX 79550-0360

SECRETARY

JIM CHERKAUER
43rd Bomb Group Assoc.
114 Thomcliff Road
Kenmore, NY 14223-1216

43rd Bomb Group Association, Inc.

NEWSLETTER

**65th Edition
January 1998**

***** FROM SAMUEL F. COMMONS, PRESIDENT *****

It is an honor to have been chosen to be President of the "WILLING ABLE READY" 43rd Bomb Group Association. Since learning of the organization's existence eight years ago, I have made attendance at the annual reunions a priority. It's been great renewing friendships of fifty years ago and also getting to know scores of other men of the 43rd. The reunions at Norfolk, Anaheim, Omaha, San Antonio, Cheyenne, Kissimmee, and Albuquerque were all wonderful experiences.

We are indebted to the organization's founder, Bob Butler. He has continued to work with Commanding Officer, Jim Pettus, and the presidents and board members to keep the organization alive and growing. We appreciate the fine job our outgoing President Jim Murphy has done, as well as the ongoing work of our Treasurer, Bill Wilson. Bill is a past president and his contribution to the group is immeasurable. He is truly "Mr. 43rd Bomb Group." An essential element keeping us together is our quarterly newsletter. Our Secretary, Jim Cherkauer, spends a lot of time compiling and editing it and it improves with each issue. We all owe Jim and his wife, Anita, our deepest appreciation for providing this vital means of communication. I was especially pleased that Max Axelsen was chosen as our vice president. Among his many contributions are updates on today's Air Force. I will be relying on the advice and opinions of these people as I take up the responsibilities of president.

Because I haven't had the privilege of meeting many of you personally, I'll share a bit about myself. Many of you recall similar experiences during the war years. Soon after my 18th birthday I enlisted in the USAAF for pilot training. Rather than wait for a call to flight school, I decided in October 1942 to go to the Aviation Mechanic School and was sent to Kessler Field in Mississippi. After completing mechanic's training, I was sent to the B-24 Willow Run Assembly plant in Michigan. From there I went to Gunner School at Harlingen, Texas. In July 1943, I was assigned to the Cain/Decesare crew in Tucson, Arizona, as flight engineer/top turret gunner.

We left the USA on November 28, 1943, with Major Jim Pettus as our C.O. and ar-

rived in New Guinea on December 28th. Our crew was stationed in Dobodura, Nadzab, Owi and Leyte. After five-three missions I returned the USA on February 16, 1945.

After graduating from Drexel University as an engineer in 1951, I worked fifteen years as plant engineer and factory superintendent for Honeywell. In 1966, I started a company doing consulting, private detective/security work and electrical contracting.

I've been enjoying retirement since 1990. My wife, Helen, is an RN working part-time, and we have three married daughters and a son who is in college. As I told the general meeting in Albuquerque when I was elected, "We have a lot more capable people in this organization than I. However, I AM WILLING to do my best for the organization."

***** FROM JIM CHERKAUER, EDITOR *****

Another one who served in the 43rd has located us and has joined our association. We welcome **HENRY J. BARTNICK**, 65th Nose Gunner from Brockport, NY. **HENRY** served on the crew of **GLEN BALES**, Pilot from Nashville, TN, along with Navigator **HENRY J. LEWIS** from Houston, TX. Actually, it was **ARNOLD HUSKINS**, Bombardier from Pittsfield, MA, who located their Nose Gunner and put him in touch with our association.

HENRY BARTNICK says that they served from New Guinea to Ie Shima when the war ended. He was anxiously awaiting our October Newsletter which he should have by now. **ARNOLD** sent him a copy of the July issue which he enjoyed very much.

Sometimes our bumper sticker pays off. **ARLENE** and **BOB ROTH**, 403rd Gunner from Redlands, CA, reported that when he and **ARLENE** approached their car after eating out for lunch, they noticed a couple looking at the 43rd bumper sticker. It turned out that **FERN** and **MEL BEHUNIN** was that couple. **MEL** served as a Radio Operator in the 43rd. He joined the Group on Biak and was with the Group through the end of the war. **MEL** knew of only one member of his crew. He had never before heard of our association. He has been sent an application and information to help him join us. If you know **MEL**, why not send him a note and urge him to join us. His address is:

3335 Sepulveda, San Bernardino, CA 92404. Ph. 909-882-5581.

RICHARD H. WERTZ, 63rd Gunner from Hollidaysburg, PA, wrote to express his thanks from him and his wife, **VALERIE**, to all of those who helped her during his illness on the bus which took them to Santa Fe during the reunion. They are especially thankful to the couple who helped at the "La Fonda" hotel. **RICHARD** also enclosed his dues for a couple of years.

In a very considerate and thoughtful move, **NICK ARABINKO**, 64th Pilot from Punta Gorda, FL, composed a letter which highlighted the events at the Albuquerque reunion. He sent this to several 64th men who could not make the reunion, and sent copies to the current officers of the association as well as some past presidents.

NICK sent along a goodly supply of humor he received from a friend in Calgary, Canada. It is on the subject of announcements published in church bulletins. [See the humor near the end of the Newsletter. I now have a small notebook full of humor from several sources including some from the Internet which has reams of humor.]

NICK writes "My Flight home was uneventful; smooth skies, on schedule and very 'uneventful' Food." He says that the love of his life, **SHIRLEY**, drew a caricature sketch of him arriving home on Sunday evening. He claims he was happy to be back to the "... heat n' humidity of Florida as there just ain't no place like home sweet home, Amen!"

TED DeFEDERICIS, 65th Pilot from Cassadaga, NY, wrote to find out just how far behind he was with his dues since the July mailing label was mixed up. [The October mailing label should be correct for all of you receiving that Newsletter.] **TED** could not make the last reunion as he is on sick call, but he did write that he was a "Bona fide War Hero. Shot down seven planes. Then they sent me overseas." [Keep up that spirit **TED**.]

In a later letter from TED with a check for his dues through '98, he enclosed a photo copy of the front page of a local newspaper (*Cheektowaga*) from June 1984, when he retired from the position of Chief Of Police in the Town of Cheektowaga, a suburb of Buffalo. In the news article it mentions that TED shot down 7 planes during WW II while he was serving as a copilot on a B-24. TED included a letter explaining the story and claim for the 7 planes shot down. It is best told in his own words.

You did know that I'm the only B-24 co-pilot who shot down seven planes, right? Well it was in the paper on the front page and you have to believe what's in the paper, right!!!

What happened was that Michelle, "a pretty thing" who was assigned to our department as the news reporter, interviewed me prior to my retirement. She was so nervous that I tried to reassure her by putting humor in our conversation. She asked me about my war record and I said, "Well, I shot down seven planes ... pause ... then they sent me overseas. Ha! Ha!" She believed me, didn't get the joke and printed it.

And would you believe that a lot of people (not Air Corps) believed it and congratulated me. The Captain of the 152nd Army Engineer Battalion, who presented me with an award at my retirement (They had trained my SWAT team) said jokingly, "Even God, who was a co-pilot (referring to Ted Lawson's book, *GOD IS MY CO-PILOT*) could not shoot down seven planes."

You can imagine the flak I received from my buddies.

TED reports that the cancer for which he has been treated for some time now has mostly disappeared although he is still undergoing chemo. He has lost a good deal of weight but feels great and is keeping that weight off. TED says that he lives on an 80 acre piece of property which is surrounded by 3,000 acres of state land. [Cassadaga is one of the several beautiful parts of Western New York.]

From Australia **TOM FITZGERALD**, Associate member, reports that he has now retired from the position of Secretary of the No. 24 Squadron Association New South Wales, and **A. T. "BERT" WOLFE** is the new secretary.

Our Newsletter goes to that association and they send theirs to us. TOM says that he has enjoyed his association with the 43rd and BERT will continue to send us their Newsletter. BERT's address is:

35 Hillcrest PDE, Highfields NSW, Australia 2289.
Phone: (02) 49434599.

From Lake Oswego, OR, **ROLAND FISHER** 63rd Pilot sends word that he has been nursing his wife, **IRMA**, after she had a total knee replacement. This gave him time to compose a limerick about the Secretary and Editor as he had promised some time ago. [This will appear with the humor later in the Newsletter.]

ROLAND has been enjoying the newsletter and thinks that all who work on this are doing a fine job.

Surfing the Internet can bring some rewarding encounters. **CLIFF NEVE**, an engineer currently stationed in **BALIKPAPAN, BORNEO**, is collecting material for a book he plans to write on the bombings of the refineries at Balikpapan. This editor and CLIFF have exchanged a number of e-mail messages and he has collected quite a bit of information. He would like to embellish what he knows about these missions. He knows that the 43rd participated in one or more missions and would like to hear from anyone who took part in such a mission. He is also offering anyone who sends him information an up to date aerial photo of Balikpapan. From what he has written me all of the groups from the 5th Bomber Command, 22nd, 43rd, 90th, and 380th, bombed those refineries at one time or another. The 13th AAF and an Australian Sqd. 82 also participated in missions against the refineries. If you want to contact him, his address is:

C/O Unocal-Balikpapan

14141 SW Freeway

Sugar Land, TX 77478

His e-mail address is: **nevebppn@indo.net.id**

At about the same time this editor contacted or was contacted by e-mail by CLIFF, he received e-mail from CY K IESH, Secretary/Editor of the 1 BG Assoc. We have exchanged a great deal of history of our organizations. CY also was in the 380th before joining the 22nd. It is interesting to note how the 22nd, the 43rd and the 90th all seem to make the same claims about some missions. In fact, while reading a good deal of material on one WWW devoted to B-24s, I noticed that the 13th AAF claims to have been instrumental in sinking the aircraft carrier (see Oct. '97 Newsletter) at Kure, Japan, which the 64th, and maybe the 65th also, was given credit for sinking on July 28, 1945.

For those of you who can visit the WWW, the one site you must visit is:

<http://www.mach3ww.com/B24/>

You will find this an immense site. It can overwhelm you. You will also notice that the 90th, the 22nd and the 380th Groups from the 5th Bomber Command have many notices and stories posted. You should note the almost total absence of anything from the 43rd BG. The editor has posted a couple of messages including a notice of our next reunion in Springfield. He did find a couple of persons from the 43rd seeking information about missing crew members, but when he contacted them and told them about our association, he received no response at all. This is very disappointing. There are many pictures of B-24s, crews, targets, etc., which you may view and download. There are interesting articles on the bombings of Balikpapan, Hong Kong and Kure Naval Base. Again, there is little or no reference to the 43rd taking part in any of this action.

MICHAEL K. SASSAMAN is researching the career of his father, **FRANCIS J. SASSAMAN**, 63rd Pilot, and would like to hear from anyone who knew his father while in the 43rd. **FRANCIS** joined the 63rd in July, 1945, and was with the squadron through the end of the war. His records indicate that he flew only one combat mission on September 2nd or 3rd. He was 28 years of age at the time and hailed from Pennsylvania.

FRANCIS first served as a copilot in September, 1943, in the newly formed 392nd Bomb Group in Europe after earning his wings and commission June 30, 1943. He joined the AAF on July 4, 1942. Upon completion of 28 missions in Europe he returned to the States in July 1944. After a tour of serving training other pilots and crews for a year, he took a crew to the Pacific in July 1945.

Following the war, **FRANCIS** stayed in service and flew C-47s and C-54s in the Berlin Airlift. Then he made the transition to jet fighters in the 50s before retiring as a Major in 1963.

MICHAEL is joining our association as an associate member, and really would like to hear from anyone who remembers his dad. His address and other pertinent information is: **9 Luce Road Waldoboro, ME 04572. Ph: 207-832-7690.**

Our past president, **MAXWELL E. OSBORN**, 65th Navigator from Sun Lakes, AR, mailed some nice compliments to the Editor and Secretary. He also reports that reading **MARCUS CARRELL's** (65th Pilot from Houston, TX) remarks about **LUCKY LUCILLE** in a recent Newsletter, reminded him that he and his crew flew that aircraft out of Dobra. They were the first crew to fly the plane as their Pilot, **PARKER S. FLOYD**, had the painting put on the nose from either a Varga or Petty girl. It was named for his girl friend. A short time later her received a Dear John letter. Recalling other crew members, **MAX** names **PAT FREEMAN** as Copilot (Eagle River, WI), **WILLIAM WESLEY FRAZIER IV** as Bombardier and himself as Navigator. **MAX** rotated in Feb. '44, so he missed the Signal Corps pictures, but he remembers **KAPITAN**, **POULSEN** and **MILLER** named by **MARCUS**. **MAX** says that he believes that he and **PAT FREEMAN** are the only ones of them to attend a reunion.

A friend of **MAX** wrote to him to say that he had seen a ad for **KEN'S MEN AGAINST THE EMPIRE** in Zenith Publications. **MAX** called **JAMES PETTUS**, 43rd C.O. and Pilot, in Hawaii, and **JIM** confirmed that he had heard of the publication. This seems to indicate that our history will indeed be published.

MAX said that he had received from President **SAMUEL COMMONS**, 65th Flight Engineer, a copy of the picture showing **SAM** receiving the Philippine Liberation Medal and

certificate after 53 years.

Enclosed with the letter from MAX OSBORN was a letter he had received from FRANK H. STAGNER of 3105 Kenland Drive, San Jose, CA 95111-3239. FRANK sent MAX his belated thanks for having his request for information about Snooper missions over Manila during the week prior to Christmas, 1944, printed in the January 1995, Newsletter. He had heard from ORION L. ROGERS, 63rd Pilot from Sun City West, AR.

Quoting directly from FRANK:

One of my main endeavors had been to try and identify the snooper unit and the aircrew possibly responsible for "delivering" a few of the Christmas leaflets to our prison camp on Christmas Day, 1944! Although being literally starved to death by our Nip jailers, these leaflets were far more exciting than the thoughts of an extra half ration of soupy and wormy rice promised for our Christmas meal.

Of course, I have also been searching for a copy of the said leaflets! In any case, thanks to Orion's descriptive reports and other information furnished by James Pettus, I am happily convinced those night-flying aircraft were actually from the 63rd Bomb. Sqd.

I did manage to clearly observe one of those Snoopers two or three nights prior to the above mentioned deliveries. My Mother had awakened my brother and myself, explained there was an air raid in progress and that we both should take shelter. As I bailed out of our bamboo and nipa hut, I noticed the area over Manila Bay was well illuminated by the beams of a large number of searchlights.

I quickly observed a lone B-24 Liberator literally glowing white while caught in the confluence of the light beams. Also observed were streams and streams of red tracer balls heading towards the Lib but thankfully, arcing and falling away short. I suspected the a/c flew directly over a few ships as some of the red balls arose in a vertical stream and appeared to possibly hit the Lib but would sort of falter then fall away.

The bomber was last observed still heading in a direction generally towards the Clark Field area before all the searchlight suddenly went out.

Max, if I may digress, there have been many questions raised as to my being able to identify any of our aircraft but let me say that it was easy. I had a few pre-war U.S. magazines in my possession and on some of the pages were photos of our then current a/c including some X models! The nose configurations as shown on the B-24D photos and the actual Libs thundering overhead may have been different but I was firmly convinced they were B-24 Liberators!

The daylight bombing attacks began either on the 20th or 21st of December and were executed by both the 22nd and the 494th Heavy Bomb Groups.

Another member referring to MARCUS CARRELL's remarks in the Oct. '97 Newsletter is PATRICK J. FREEMAN, 65th Pilot from Eagle River, WI. PAT says that the man referred to as LLOYD in those remarks about the aircraft LUCKY LUCILLE, was FLOYD - PARKER S. FLOYD. PAT agrees that PARKER named the aircraft. In that crew were Sgts. OLSEN, ADAMSON, ELINGER, DEFFINDERFER, CHASE and NOYES. The officers included Lts. FLOYD, FREEMAN, MAX OSBORN and W.W. FRAZIER IV from Roxborough Farms, PA. Quoting PAT, "It was the 'Million Dollar Crew.'"

PAT also enclosed a check for his dues and then some. He says that like a good many others with regard to that "book," he is beginning to feel "We have been had."

After seeing his name on the list "Bill's Bad Boys," WATHEN F. CODY, 63rd Flight

Engineer from Tell City, IN, mailed in his life time dues. He does not want to be late with his dues again. WATSON says that he served in the 63rd from early 1942. He flew with McCULLAR, MURPHY, LUTLER, BECKSTROM, DIEFFENDERFER, DEER, DELOACH, Gen. RAMEY, Major BENN, BARNETT, CHILES of the 19th Group, HIRSCH, BANKROFT, BURKOWITZ and many others he couldn't recall at the time he wrote. [Many of these names are probably those of some of our current members, but the editor will not attempt to make that conclusion even though so many similar names appear in our 1996 Roster as well as in the book, *SKIP BOMBING*, by our immediate past president JAMES T. MURPHY, 63rd Pilot.]

BEN R. DAMRON, 65th [Ground Crew?], from Stanford, KY, wrote that he had a letter from JAMES "MAC" McCLURE, 65th from Suitland, MD. MAC had noticed that BEN made the reunion in Albuquerque, but MAC could not attend as he has not been in the best of health and was in Bethesda at the time of the reunion.

BEN said that his going to the reunion was touch and go right up until the day before he and JANE would be leaving if they were to attend. His doctor gave him a prescription for asthma in case BEN had an attack while at the reunion, and then the doctor told him to go and enjoy it. BEN says that he did, but he missed seeing a lot of the old ground crew members there.

Ben had asked for another Newsletter to be mailed to him as he did not receive one that MAC had already. Then BEN fired off another letter later that same day, Nov. 5th, to say that his Newsletter arrived in the afternoon mail. [It has taken the USPS an unusually long time to deliver the Oct. Newsletter to some parts of the country.]

Our new President, SAMUEL F. COMMONS, 65th Flight Engineer from Flourtown, PA, sent e-mail on the Nov. 10th to say that he had just received a phone call from DOC "BUD" GUSACK, 65th Flight Surgeon from Chevy Chase, MD. DOC was reporting the passing of JOSHUA H. BARNES Jr., 65th B-17 Pilot from Winchester, KY, on Nov. 8, 1997. He served in the era of WILLIAM H. WILSON Jr., 65th Pilot from Snyder, TX. JOSH's wife ALICE was with him in the hospital in Winchester at the time of his passing. They last attended a reunion in Cheyenne, WY. DOC had notified JAMES T. PETTUS, 43rd C.O. and Pilot from Honolulu, HI, also a friend of JOSH in the service.

Just 3 days after Veterans Day, ANN BACON called to report that her husband, LAYTON P. BACON 65th Ground Crewman from Pierson, FL, was in very critical condition. He was under the care of Hospice at that time. ANN said that LAYTON had named the plane, *GEORGIA PEACH*, and that R. F. "BOB" WATSON, 65th Bombardier from Lebanon, IL, the general coordinator, along with IRENE, for the yearly reunions, flew in that plane.

ROBERT A. CLAYCOMBE, 65th Pilot from Indianapolis, IN, found the last reunion to be great. He says his crew arrived on Ie Shima near the end of the war so he does not know many of the veterans mentioned in the Newsletter, but 4 members of his crew made it to Albuquerque. Besides BOB they include the Copilot, WILLIAM C. MYLES from Campbellsville, KY, Navigator HAROLD BUELOW, from Culleoka, TN, and Engineer BETHEL F. RAY from Arrington, TN.

He enclosed his dues with his letter and inquired about VIRGINIA MATHIAS from Andover, MA. The 65th registration sheet at the reunion shows VIRGINIA MATHIAS (GINGRANDE), and he wants to know if she has a new name or has remarried and has a new address. If you read this VIRGINIA, why not let BOB know? BOB is another of our members hooked up to the Internet. He and the editor have been in contact several times via e-mail.

Enclosed with his '98 dues ROMEO E. FURIO, 65th from Monessen, PA, reports that he has had operations for a quadruple by-pass, double hernia, gall bladder removal, double cataracts and double implants in his eyes. He hopes that now he will be able to keep up with what is going on.

ROMEO says "Hello" to other 65th buddies: **GENE MURAP**, Maintenance from Florissant, MO; **DOC MILTON G. JACK**, Flight Surgeon from Chevy Chase, MD; and **ALBERT PEPE**, Armament Officer from Snyder, NY.

When remitting his '98-'99 dues, **HUGH H. HIMES**, Headquarters from Cheyenne, WY, says he is sorry he missed the '97 reunion, but it could not be helped. He is looking forward to the '98 reunion in Springfield. He reports that all is fine in Wyoming.

Along with many of you saying you appreciate the Newsletter is **JOHN J PERKINS**, 403rd Nose Gunner from Dallas, TX. **JOHN** also enclosed his '98 dues.

It is always difficult to report the passing of another of our buddies. Mrs. **JOHN W. BERTRAM** has notified us that **JOHN W. BERTRAM**, 65th from Fairfax, VA, died of cancer on August 23, 1997.

Equally sad is the news that **NATHAN J. MALNEKOFF**, Chicago, IL, passed away on June 26, 1997.

RICHARD B. BELL, 403rd Truck Mechanic from Omaha, NE, mailed **BILL** his '98 dues along with a new phone number. His area code has been changed: 402-556-8678.

RICHARD says that his wife, **FLORENCE**, is still under the care of Hospice and has been for nearly a year. He says that she seems to be holding her own, but is quite weak and has difficulty getting around.

He began his letter in October and ended it in November. The interruption was caused by a 12" snow and ice storm that left 120,000 people without power. "The trees looked like a Texas Twister had passed through." He reported that many streets were blocked by downed trees.

The confusion caused by the mailing labels with the July edition of the Newsletter is still around. **DONALD L. FENNER**, 403rd from Lake Wales, FL, wonders what happened, but he sent in dues wondering just which year he is now paid through. ['98] Like a number of others he enclosed a contribution to the Association with his dues.

KENNETH BROWN, 64th Pilot from El Paso, TX, wrote to follow up on an address change which apparently was not registered after his move from Ft. Worth to El Paso, but all is now straightened out. He did receive his October Newsletter correctly.

BILLIE J. QUINETTE reports that her husband, **CHARLES F. QUINETTE**, 63rd Pilot from Riverside, CA, died on September 19, 1997 in Riverside.

She says that **CHARLES** "... loved being a part of the 43rd. God bless you all."

Paying his dues through the year 2000 is **CLIFFORD J. KOCHA**, 65th Mess Sgt. from Green Bay, WI.

CLIFF asks about an item in the last Newsletter which mentions a map showing Owi. He would like a copy of such so that he can pin point just where Owi is located. [Our new President furnished a photo copy of a map showing Owi off the southern coast of Biak. I made a copy and sent it to you. You have to check with Larry Hickey to see if he has your current address. We do not have that information.]

He also reports a change in area code: 920-499-2666. He asks that the last 4 digits of his zip code be added to his address: 54303-4216.

Enclosing his '98 dues **HOWARD S. BOOTH**, 63rd Pilot from Orinda, CA, writes "Lord Willing. We'll be at the '98 Re-union in Springfield ____."

63rd Personnel Officer, **ROBERT G. YECK**, of Silver Springs, MD, sent in his Life Membership dues saying "I guess that I'm looking forward to many more years on this planet - I Hope!"

In a letter to our Treasurer, **BILL WILSON**, 65th Pilot from Snyder, TX, **MARGARET BLAIR** of Kings Park, NY, and widow of the late **FRED BLAIR** of the 63rd, thanks **BILL** for selling some of **FRED**'s books at the reunion.

She still wants to continue receiving the Newsletter and is planning to return to Sydney, Australia, in the new year to visit her "Aussie" family and to get away from the cold.

In a letter to our President **JAMES T. MURPHY**, 63rd Pilot from Huntsville, AL, another former 403rd Pilot, **WILLIAM L. WELCH**, sends us a change of address:

WILLIAM and BETTY WELCH 10005 Villa Ridge Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89134.

Phone: 702-242-9230.

BILL served with the 403rd from Sept. '42 until Nov. '43. He completed 98 missions. Over 50 of these were in B-17s and the remaining in B-24s as squadron commander. He replaced **JAY ROUSEK** in April 1943.

He says that he has attended quite a few reunions, but more recently age has been catching up with him, and he has not traveled much since a long trip to Russia in 1992.

They have decided to make Las Vegas their home and have purchased a new home in which they plan on residing in for a long time to come.

BILL says that when the reunion comes west again, he hopes to see us there. He sends particular regards to some old timers **PAUL PASKVAN** [403rd Pilot from Countryside, IL], **BOB BUTLER** [63rd Bombardier from Fayetteville, NC], **ART DURBECK** [403rd Pilot from Bradenton, FL], **CHUCK DOWNER** [403rd Pilot from Chattsworth, CA] and others.

MARGARET HICKSON sends word that her husband, **RICHARD D. HICKSON**, 64th Radio Operator of Corsicana, TX, passed away May 25, 1997. She says that after 47 years of marriage she is very lost. They have two grown children, **RICHARD HICKSON** and **DEBBIE FUNDERBURK** as well as five grandchildren. She says that they were a close family. This is such sad news. [You will continue to get the Newsletter, **MARGARET**.]

From Huntington Valley, PA, **NUNCIO C. BONINO**, 63rd, wants to know what is going on? He paid his '97 dues and has received not one Newsletter this year. He does not want to pay his '98 dues until he is sure he will receive the Newsletter. [The Jan., Apr., Jul. and Oct. Newsletters have been sent to you. Your address problem will be corrected. You weren't even listed among "Bill's Bad Boys." See Oct. Newsletter.]

64th Waist Gunner, **LYLE HEINEKE** from Benson, IL, writes that he had just finished reading the October Newsletter which he enjoys very much. He says that he keeps meeting guys at the reunions that he knew 53 years ago. This year he joined up with **JOE STRONG**, Mission Hills, CA, and **LYLE GOLDNER**, Ball Gunner from San Antonio, TX, also from the 64th.

His biggest thrill this year was a reunion of his crew a week before the Albuquerque reunion. He says that thanks to **PAUL LEDGER**, 63rd Sergeant Major from Fort Wayne, IN, who found 3 of the crew, they had 6 of 10 crewmen at the mini reunion. The Bombardier, **ROY NIEMEYER** of East Lansing, MI, made the arrangements and they met at his home by Lake Michigan. They had a wonderful time renewing acquaintances and reliving their war experiences. Also in attendance were Pilot **ED ROSS**, Copilot **RAYMOND PLANK** of Denver, CO, Radio Operator **GEORGE R. TUCHOLSKI** from Middleburg Hts., OH, and Nose Gunner **GORDON WICKSTROM**.

Of the remainder of the crew Tail Gunner, **VINCE SARNICOLA** would have attended but his sister passed away the day before the mini reunion. Flight Engineer **JOHN McNALLY** passed away in May of '96. Navigator, **GEORGE STARK** of Baraga, MI, could not travel, and Waist Gunner **JOE THOMAS** could not be located.

LYLE says that he briefed them all about our Association.

In mid October, **LYLE** received a letter from **RAY PLANK** with the sad news that their host, **ROY NIEMEYER**, died of a heart attack while fishing in Canada with **RAY**. Those

two had remained close friends since the war and hunted and fished together. LYLE says that he is ever so thankful that they were able to get together before this untimely event. He sent his letter to **BILL** with a check for his '98 dues on Veterans Day.

Mailing in his '98 dues and wondering what is happening with our "History" is **SAMUEL E. WELBORN**, 64th Engineer from Naples, FL, says he paid for the book a long time ago. He does report that he enjoys the Newsletter.

Catching up and getting ahead with dues is **ROBERT R. IRELAND**, 64th Pilot from Milton-Freewater, OR, with his dues now paid through '99. He says that he never made a reunion but hopes to one of these days. He finds the Newsletter a pleasure to read.

FRANCIS L. WALKER, 65th Flight Engineer from Eustis, FL, apologizes for being being late with his dues, but he says at 80+ years he is just a little slow at getting at his duties.

He finds the Newsletter interesting and says that he knows a few guys mentioned in those. He was Engineer on **AL TURNER**'s crew and flew about 35 missions when 8 of the crew were sent home leaving him and the radio operator. Only 3 of that crew are still around. In addition to **FRANCIS** there are **LUD MILLER** from NY and **JOHN BARTELL** of WV.

Associate member **RICHARD W. ANDERSON**, 417th Bomb Group from Laurel, MD, remitted his dues with a request to get on "Bill's Good Boys' List." He wrote that he has read stories by **MICHAEL CLARINGBOULD**, Associate member from Fiji, and compares them to the Newsletter which he finds to be equally good.

DAVID J. KARMOSAY has joined the Association and paid dues through '99. **DAVID** is the son of the late **JOSEPH KARMOSAY**, 403rd from Dayton, OH, who **DAVID** informs us passed away Sept. 28, 1995. **DAVID** says that the very much wants to be an associate member in memory of his father. His address is the same Ohio address as that in the Roster for **JOSEPH**.

Keeping up with his dues is **CARL A. HUSTAD**, 63rd Pilot from Edina, MN. **CARL** started in B-18s at Bangor, ME. Also enclosed with that letter was one from his wife, **GINNY**. She reports that **CARL** had a fall last summer and had not recovered in October when she wrote to **BILL WILSON** to thank him for the card he sent them from Albuquerque. She says **CARL** sleeps and rests in a recliner. He was taking therapy twice a week and has a series of exercises he must perform daily. It will also take time for a full recovery.

Submitting dues for '98-'99, according to his records [which are correct] but not according to his mailing label, is **CLAIR L. WRIGHTS**, 63rd Radio Operator from Chambersburg, PA. He says that he missed the '97 reunion for reasons other than health. He received a phone call from **JIM DIEFFENDERFER**, 63rd Pilot from Orlando, FL, and **CLAIR**'s favorite pilot, who was concerned whether health reasons kept **CLAIR** and **JULIA** from making it to Albuquerque. **CLAIR** says it was gratifying to know that they were missed.

Expressing regrets that he did not make it to Albuquerque, but hoping to make it to Springfield in '98 is **RALPH D. GRUBB**, 64th Tail Gunner from Pulaski, VA. He thanks **BILL** all for the good work for the Association and enclosed his '98 dues.

TED J. BIBY, 403rd Photo/Lab from Winfield, KS, writes that he sees that he is not the only one having dues paying problems. He paid up through '99 and wants his name off the delinquent list.. He says we should throw away those computers and go back to the old fashioned way of keeping track of dues payments. He asserts that "The computer, like the electric lite is not here to stay."

He says that he enjoys the Newsletter. He and his wife, **LOIS**, are in good shape and

in their early 80s. They just take an aspirin and a roll-aid occasionally. He ends with a verse he plans to put on his foot stone:

I may go to Heaven, or I may go to hell.
But I've had a great time in this old shell.
Occupation - Carpenter
Cause of death - hemorrhoids.

Along with his '98 dues, **PAUL BLASEWITZ**, 403rd and 63rd Tail Gunner, mailed us some corrections for the next Roster. So here are some changes you can make in the current Roster. His address is 1828 Stancel Dr., Clearwater, FL 33764. PAUL says that he lost his wife in 1993.

Until that history goes to press there will always be those questions about what has happened or is happening with it. **LEROY ESTERGARD**, 403rd from Cocoa, FL, mailed BILL his '98 dues and wants to know what has taken place. He remembers paying for the book well in advance. He thanks all for the hard work in keeping our Association going.

Sending in his '98 dues from Boca Raton, FL, **PAUL INDYKE**, Bombardier from the 63rd, has informed us that he believes that **JOHN P. HARMON**, 63rd Navigator from Scobie, MT, is deceased. PAUL finds the Newsletter a fine source of information and hopes that we can keep it going for a long time.

Sending BILL his '98 dues **Le ROY R. JONES**, 63rd from Tecumseh, NE, says that he and his wife, **PATRICIA**, would be happy to send BILL some of their October snow!

Another Nebraskan, **ELWYN H. HANSEN**, 403rd from North Platte, sent BILL his dues along with a long newsy letter. ELWYN wrote in early November that he and **PHYLLIS** are doing pretty well although she is recovering from surgery on her left eye and was experiencing some difficulty at that time. She had surgery on the right eye some time back, and it is doing fine. He says that he had a slight stroke about a year prior to his letter. He spent time in the hospital on sick call and had a recuperation period afterwards, but he is thankful that there were no bad effects resulting from the stroke.

ELWIN writes that he just retired from his part-time job with a diesel fuel pump and injector repair business which enabled him to travel over western Nebraska, parts of S. Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado and Kansas. His lifetime work was as an International Harvester Co. Construction dealer where they sold and serviced many kinds of machinery. He actually specialized in fuel systems. ELWYN said it was a good living which provided his family well and paid for the education of their two daughters. He says that they have 4 grandsons, 3 of them in college and the fourth near college age, and a granddaughter who also is close to college age.

He says that the 403rd had a reunion in Aurora, NE, at the same time as the 43rd's reunion in Albuquerque. About 20 attended the mini reunion and had a great time.

J. C. "CHUNKEY" WILFERT, 63rd Navigator and Lifetime member from Crowley, LA, sent BILL his annual generous donation to the Association. He said that since he was late this year, he would assess himself an increase in his donation for whatever way the Association saw fit to use it. He reported that **CLARA MARIE** has now completely recuperated from her fall, and they really missed not being at Albuquerque. They are looking forward to Springfield next year. He was stationed at Westover for two years and their son was born in Springfield in January 1946. They have many fond memories of the area as well as friends there they will enjoy visiting.

The Fullenwider family notified the Association that **CAROL FULLENWIDER**, squadron and duty unknown, recently of Dunnellon, FL, passed away on 10/23/97.

Sending BILL has dues for '97-'98, **CHARLIE MARVEL**, 403rd Radio/Radar Operator and Gunner from Overland Park, KS, penned a short note on a small bit of paper recycled

from an auto window glazing advertisement. He said that he really wasn't tight, but just a carry over from days (or size) of years past like those in New Guinea where he apparently learned to save and use everything. He sends "Best Wishes and Good Health to All."

MAX E. LONG, 403rd Armor Gunner from Laurel, MT, included a nice donation to the Association with his '98 dues. He wrote "I certainly can't say enough good things about the news letter. It's really great and I enjoy it so much." [Ed.'s note. That makes my task much easier. Thanks.] He thanks us all for keeping his past alive.

MAX wrote that this past August he had the chance to take a one-hour flight on the B-24 *ALL AMERICAN* while it was in Billings, Montana. That turned out to be almost 52 years to the day that he flew his last mission in a B-24 from Ie Shima which did not cost him \$300.

Another who elected to become a Life Member and not have to worry about whether or not he paid his dues each year is **HAIG SALVERIAN**, 63rd Nose Gunner from Huntingdon Valley, PA. He says that from one of the Bad Boys he got to be a Top Good Boy.

Sending Greetings from the Ozarks is **ROBERT L. "SHEP" SHEPPARD**, Headquarters Citation Clerk. He says that when it's time to turn the furnace on and start to rake leaves, it is time to pay your dues again, and as we get "more mature" the faster time seems to go. He did remember to pay those '98 dues.

He expresses regrets that he did not make the reunion in '97, but it sounds like all had a good time as usual.

SHEP says that when he attended the Omaha reunion, it seemed like most of those there were from the B-17 era, while he joined the group in January of 1945. Prior to that he was at HQ VBC. When he was assigned to HQ 43rd, he worked in the citations section under **SPENCER "SPIKE" WOOLLEY**. SHEP replaced **JIM DAVIS**. That made him popular with JIM who then headed home to the States. The two remained in touch until JIM passed away a couple of years ago.

SHEP thanks us for explaining the mix up on dues paid date on the July mailing of the Newsletter as he had thought maybe we were passing into the "twilight zone" for a brief period. He too enjoys the Newsletter and sends his best to all.

Trying to add some light as to when the 43rd left Clark Field for Ie Shima, **PAUL F. PUCHALSKY**, 63rd from Dover, DE, says that although he does not know when the 63rd left Subic Bay, he knows that he arrived on Ie Shima on August 5, 1945. His records also indicate that he came down with a fever of 103 degrees on August 7, 1945, as he was suffering from an attack of malaria. [The Group did not move as one unit on its way to Ie Shima. Some of us flew there in July and flew missions to Japan before the boat(s) arrived with most of the Group.]

PAUL recalls that while spending 10 days to recover from his attack of malaria, the Japanese came to Ie Shima in two Betty bombers painted white with green crosses on them. These carried the group which came to negotiate in Manila the arrangements for a formal surrender.

He enclosed his '98 dues and hopes that the publisher of the History has his updated address. [That is a matter each person who has pre-ordered the book should take care of with **LARRY HICKEY**.]

Writing a few lines when sending in his '98 dues is **SALVATORE MUSELLA**, 65th Radio Operator from Stuart, FL. SAL says that he had just finished reading the Oct. Newsletter when he wrote and that it was always a pleasure to read about current things that are going on in the Association and about war buddies. He is sorry that he and **EMILY** missed the Albuquerque reunion, but God willing they plan to be in Springfield.

Along with a check for his '98-'99 dues **DON WILLITS**, 65th Crew Chief from Florence, OR, tells an interesting story. He said that in October of 1945 the ground crew

was preparing a B-24 to fly back to the States from Ie Shima when someone decided that the crew chiefs should accompany their planes. That was his only mission. He remembers the pilot as **JIM BROWN** from Harrisburg, PA, but he remembers nothing about the rest of the crew. DON wonders if anyone else remembers this operation which was called Operation Sunset? [A good many of those who flew in that operation attend our reunions and talk about their experiences flying home. Let's hear more of them!]

LEO H. THALER, 403rd Flight Engineer from Hollis, NY, sent in dues through '99. He is looking for a 403rd jacket patch. If anyone has a spare, let LEO know. He actually wants 2 of them for his grandsons.

He wonders whether anyone knows the pilot of the crew on which he served? The pilot's name is **CALVIN C. MERCER**. LEO wonders what CALVIN is doing and where he is living. He would appreciate any help from anyone who knows about CALVIN.

Sending a check for 3 years of dues **CLYDE F. MUSE Jr.**, 403rd Bombardier from Big Pine Key, FL, writes that he is enjoying the Newsletters. He thinks that after Rabaul not many missions have been mentioned. He is also wondering who is selling the 43rd's history and when he will get back the pictures and schedule he provided. [The sale of this book is handled directly through **LARRY HICKEY**. The editor assumes that you loaned that material to LARRY also. He is the one to contact about its return. Did you provide him with a correct address? You have changed yours. Was that after you loaned out your material? It was my impression that these materials had all been returned to their owners some time ago.]

CLYDE says that he joined the 403rd in '44. He already had flown 64 missions before being transferred. He then flew 37 missions, not point missions, with the last being to bomb the causeway between Honshu and Kyushu Islands. He was the lead bombardier and found out last year that there were 210 B-24s in the formation. He had the target right in the cross-hairs when the mission was canceled - the war was over. On his birthday, 5 days later, the Japs quit!

He left Okinawa on Oct. 15th on the first plane for home. His promotion for Captain caught up with him before his separation. The C.O. at Clark Field had pigeon holed his promotion while the war was on. CLYDE spent 30 months in the S.W.P.A. from Port Moresby, New Guinea, to Ie Shima. He said that he had many exciting and possible disasters happen to him along the way. Most were in B-25s. He is still able to talk and write about those experiences, but he knows that "A lot of fine and good men aren't."

Note the change of address for CLYDE: **1577 Bogie Drive, Big Pine Key, FL 33043.**

The October Newsletter of the 90th Bomb Group Assoc. summarizes the events at their last national reunion in Santa Clara, CA, last Sept. There are also very brief accounts for 3 mini reunions held in different parts of the country. Their next annual reunion will be held in Richmond, VA, on Sept. 16-20, 1998.

The September Newsletter of the No. 24 SQUADRON ASSOC. NEW SOUTH WALES carries an article which might be of interest to those of you who were in Australia in 1942. The writer claims that the story has been top secret and still is, but he is not bound to this because he did not sign the Secrecy Declaration. The story follows:

During the Jap air raids on Darwin in 1942, a large force of Japanese parachuted into the Darwin area.

Our Army forces defeated these troops in fierce hand-to-hand fighting. No prisoners were taken as Japs laying Doggo killed quite a few of our troops, so they made certain that any Jap, either hooked up in a tree by his parachute lines or laying doggo on the ground, were dead.

One Aussie casualty with a serious leg wound was taken to a hospital. He hooked his Dog Tags on the bed then forgot about them. He was quickly evacuated to Adelaide to have his leg amputated. A further casualty from the action took his vacated bed and died.

The Dog Tags and the 2nd bed-taker were buried at Adelaide River War Cemetery

under the first casualty' name.

The first casualty's wife was advised of his death, and when he eventually arrived home, she said, "What are you doing here? You're dead."

They have both viewed his War Grave which is still in Adelaide River War Cemetery.

Each Army member at the time, had to sign a Secrecy Declaration, as news of this action would have caused Panic and Pandemonium all over Australia.

Even the 50 years Statute of Limitations does not apply to these Veterans. and today they are still denied Recognition for their Heroic Action.

During the Bob Menzies time as Prime Minister, the remains of the Japanese were exhumed and returned to Japan for an Honorable Burial. - ANOTHER SECRET.

An item that would be of interest to many of you who knew the late **FR. THOMAS F. SHEA**, Chaplain from Headquarters, comes from **THOMAS W. JAMISON**, 65th Pilot from Ojai, CA. TOM wrote that he had made a video of FR. SHEA's last memorial service in Bossier City [LA] in 1987. He had made copies for the late **DICK WOOD** and **JOSE HOLLIGUIN**. After talking with **JIM PETTUS**, 43rd Pilot and CO from Honolulu, in Albuquerque, he made a cassette tape of the audio portion of the video. JIM suggested that this might be played at a future reunion since it may be too difficult to get the right set up to show the video. Tom says the tape runs about 6 minutes, but running the video, if it can be arranged would be even better. [ATTENTION: **BOB WATSON** and **RUSS BURNETT**.]

Enclosed with his check for '98 dues **LON H. WEYLAND**, 64th from Hot Springs, AR, writes that there are 2 of you reading this who can provide all of the information he is seeking about where the 43rd was stationed along with exact dates in response to the inquiry [p. 13] made in the last Newsletter. LON says that he will provide no names so you won't be swamped with requests, but you know who you are. [LON, why not write directly to either or both of them?] One of you sent a copy of 150 pages of your personal diary to him. It shows assignments, 154 completed missions as well as 1076 combat hours. He says he was lucky to be your tent mate for quite awhile.

LON also says that the book, *CLAIMS TO FAME: B-17 FLYING FORTRESS*, by Steve Birdsall and Roger Freeman is a great book which gives full credit to the 43rd.

Among those paying dues is **HAROLD W. DONNER**, 63rd Gunner from Tonawanda, NY, with his '98 due. Catching up with past dues and paying through '98 is **WILLIAM E. BURNS**, 403rd from Saginaw, TX. Paying past and '98 dues is **ALEXANDER F. HYDAK**, 63rd from Fort Worth, TX. **D. DEXTER D. FAIRBANKS**, 403rd Pilot from St. Clair Shores, MI, sent his dues with a welcome contribution to the Association. Also paying his '98 dues with a gift is **GARLAND H. GRIMSLEY**, 65th Nose Gunner from Tallahassee, FL. Bring their dues up to date are **MORRIS E. PETTY**, 65th Pilot from Odessa, TX; **FRED M. PETERS**, 63rd Personnel from San Mateo, CA; and **EMIL LANGE Jr.**, 64th Bombardier from Syracuse, NY;

LEWIS "LEW" B. WHITWORTH, 64th Flight Engineer, writes that after October 4, 1997, all mail to him should go to: **10492 S.E. 179th Pl**
Summerfield, FL. 34491.

LEW says he waiting for that History Book!! He wonders if I am too? [Don't wonder any longer. YES, I too am getting restless about that history. I imagine that we all are.]

Paying his lifetime membership is **DONALD E. GRIMES**, Draftsman from Headquarters. He writes that his area phone code has been changed. It is now: **913-272-7233**.

Don't put those ROSTERs away/ Here is another change of address:

JOSEPH E. PECORARO
12 Amagansett Court
Ridge, NY 1196-1603

Another change of address along with a dues for '97-'98 came from, **ROY PERRY** 63rd Flight Engineer from Prescott Valley, AZ. He expressed sorrow for missing the '97 reunion, but his doctor had told him not to travel. He does hope that he and **JIMMIE** get to the Tucson reunion in '99.

ROY said that he met with **BETTY CROFT** from Montrose, CO, and widow of **WILLIAM CROFT**, and **PAT & CHARLES "CHUCK" RAUCH**, 63rd Navigator from Punta Gorda, FL, in Santa Fe, NM. He says that **CHUCK** found **E Z SNYDER**, Radio Operator on **CROFT'S** crew in Texas.

PERRY's new address is: **2033 Oxford**
Prescott Valley, AZ 86314.

On the first of December a letter arrived from **CHUCK RAUCH** with the news that he found **EDWIN Z. "EZ" SNYDER** by using the Internet after searching for 20 years for other crew members. He and **EZ** had a long chat via the phone on August 30th. **EZ** told **CHUCK** that he would try to make the Springfield reunion. On September 17, 1997, **EZ** died leaving his widow, **BETTY**, as well as 5 children.

CHUCK enclosed an obituary of **EZ** along with an article, "THE CATTLE TRAIN," which **EZ** had written about his grandfather. **EZ** had been in the oil industry, real estate and farming. He later devoted himself to the publication of "Drilling Reports" for which he was awarded the Bell Freedom Award, Accuracy in Reporting, Nov. 2, 1991, by the National Association of Royalty Owners, Inc. His passion for the oil industry was perhaps matched by his passion for writing his family history.

Along with his '98 dues, **JOSEPH SHAPURAS**, 65th, sent us his new address and phone number.
250 Rosery Rd. NW Apt. 340
Phone: 813-582-9097.

A nice contribution to help defray expenses arrived from **JOHN M. BUSLINGER** of Palm Bay, FL. **JOHN** joined the association since the last Roster was published so the secretary has no information as to his squadron or duty. He hopes that we have an extra Roster to send to him. He says that he missed the 1997 reunion but sure hopes to make the one in Springfield in '98.

Early in December the secretary received a phone call from **BRET STRINGER** of the Indiana Air National Guard. He had recently learned of the 43rd Association and was tracking down its secretary. He found **BILL WILSON** first. **BILL** referred him to me. **BRET** is the grandson of **ROBERT THURMAN KNIGHT**, a 403rd Navigator also from Indiana. **THURMAN** had never heard of our association. He apparently was of the early B-24 era according to **BRET** who told me that he was going to join us as an associate member and probably would sign his grandfather up too.

In e-mail **SAMUEL COMMONS**, our new President and Flight Engineer from Flourtown, PA, reports that he had a 5 page letter from **ALFRED HAGEN**, Associate from Philadelphia and nephew of the late Maj. **BILL BENN**, father of skip bombing and CO of the 63rd, telling **SAM** of his latest trip to New Guinea. [For those of you who did not attend the reunion in Kissimmee and the reunion in Albuquerque, **ALFRED** gave us very interesting and informative talks with videos of two of his trips to New Guinea in search of **BILL BENN's** B-25 which was never found after it disappeared over 54 years ago.]

SAM had just come back from a Health Fair where his Congressman, Fox, and VA personnel had explained to those in attendance what vets are entitled to and how they could sign up for present and future medical care and medicines. He says this is something we should all sign up for and hope we never need to use.

Oh yes, **SAM** said that it was too windy for golf on December 2nd.

In a letter which **JAMES T. PETTUS**, Pilot and CO from Honolulu, sent to me with regard to some information the editor had given him about persons formerly with the 6th AAF, who had joined the 43rd when the editor did, he relates an interesting anecdote

about his attempts to be sent back to the States. JIM had been suggesting to Gen. **ENNIS WHITEHEAD** that the general should send him home on leave and let him get checked out in the B-24N, a single tail plane he hoped the 43rd would have one day. The general would have none of this. JIM's father was in the shoe business and would send him beautiful dress shoes which JIM never got to wear. Inside the shoe on the heel was stamped:

"Made for Lt. Col. James T. Pettus by the International Shoe Co."

JIM gave a pair of these shoes to Col. **BILL HUDNELL** who was visiting at the time. The shoes did not fit him and he passed them on to Gen. **WHITEHEAD**. After a briefing, the general thanked JIM for the shoes. JIM reminded him that his name was in the heel and he would see it every time he put the shoes on. That would remind the general it was time to send JIM home. Quoting JIM, "He did not think it was funny at all and said tersely - 'You can go home when I go home, and that is when this god damned war is over.'"

The night they returned from Atugi after taking the surrender party into Japan, Col. **LACKEY**, JIM and several others were at **WHITEHEAD**'s place on Okinawa for a report on the day and a press conference. At that time the general approached Jim and said, "Remember what I said - you can go home now."

Our Vice President, **MAX M AXELSEN**, 403rd Pilot from San Antonio, TX, mailed the editor a nice collection of some rare humor to use with the newsletters of the future. [Please hold off with humor fellows. I now have a collection which should last me for the next 30 or more issues. Thanks for the thought.]

Braxton Bradford from Tampa, FL, has written to find out if anyone in our association has any information on a Sgt. **JACK E. SKIVER**. Braxton says that JACK was an aerial gunner during the Battle of Bismarck Sea and may have shot down several Zeros. If anyone knows of JACK, who is not in our Roster, let Braxton know. His address is:

**4513 S. Oak Dr. #Q 72
Tampa, FL 33611.**

Here are some reunion notices that be of interest to a number of our readers. These come via **LLOYD "BREEZY" BOREN**, 65th Bombardier from San Antonio, TX. **BREEZY** also forwarded some letters he had received but which were for the current secretary. **BREEZY** likes the good work on the Newsletter.

Members of the **19th Bomb Gp. Assoc.** will hold a reunion on 6, 7, 8 & 9 May 1988 at the Inn Suites Hotel, Tucson, Arizona. Contact **Robert E. Ley**, 3574 Wellston Ct. Simi Valley, CA 93063. Phone 818-703-7717.

April 25, 1998, **SANTA ANA ARMY AIR BASE** 23rd Annual Reunion and Luncheon, Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, CA. **Former S.A.A.A.B. Personnel: Civilian, Military, Aviation Cadets and Guests.** Contact S.A.A.A.B. Wing, P.O. Box 1764, Costa Mesa, CA 92628. Tel. (714) 631-5918, Wed. - Fri. 10 A.M.-3 P.M. or 24 Hour Ans. Machine. **PLEASE LEAVE NAME and ADDRESS.**

The U.S. Information Service in Sydney, Australia, referred **George Luksa** to our Association in his quest to gather certain information. He is involved in the development of a Museum to commemorate the U.S. and Australian Air Force Squadrons who were active in Far North Queensland (Townsville, Cairns and Mareeba) during WW II.

George is hoping that through our organization and readers like you (former 43rd members or family) that he will be able to obtain as much information as possible, e.g., copies of newspapers from that time, photos, etc. In particular, he would be interested in receiving letters detailing personal experience from such ex-personnel.

He also indicated an interest in joining our Association so that he could receive this publication regularly. [An application is on the way.]

DOTTIE EDWARDS from Massillon, OH, and recent widow of the late **RUSS EDWARDS**, 63rd Flight Engineer, expresses her "Thank You" to so many of you for your phone calls, notes and memorials for **RUSS** after he lost a valiant fight with cancer. She says she is managing well under the circumstances and will be with family over the holidays.

Enclosed with materials regarding the upcoming '98 reunion, **RUSS BURNETT** of Conway, MA, 64th Flight Engineer and co-host with **JANE** of the '98 reunion in Springfield, was a note that Dr. **HENRY S. BLANK**, 64th Flight Surgeon, would be celebrating his 90th birthday anniversary on the 17th of December. His address is: 2021 N.W. 5th Ave., Gainesville, FL 32603-1529. Phone: 352-376-5864.

Along with a check for a couple years' dues, **JACK NUNNELLEE**, Nose Gunner from Salem, OR, says that he has just recovered from a horrible attack of the shingles. He found this much worse than his past hernia operations and knee replacements, but he figures that he will make it to a few more reunions.

Arriving via e-mail was a good deal more humor from **M. L. "SHAD" SHADDOX**, 64th Pilot from Friendswood, TX. **SHAD** and his wife **NAOMI** as well as a number of others sent the editor Christmas greetings via e-mail. [This is greatly appreciated.]

The promised limerick from **ROLAND FISHER**. He says it is his one clean limerick of the year.

Let's Cheer For Our Good Jim Cherkauer,
He's Truly Our Man Of The Hour.
When The Group Needed Help
He - With Nary a Yelp
Showed Great Secretarial Power.

Some humor reportedly taken from physicians' notes:

Patient has chest pain if she lies on her left side for over a year.

The patient has no past history of suicides.

The patient has been depressed ever since she began seeing me in 1983.

"Actual Announcements Published in Church Bulletins" from **NICK ARABINKO**.

Don't let worry kill you - the church will help.

The rosebud on the alter this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Belzer, the son of Reverend & Mrs. Julius Belzer.
The service will close with [little drops of water]. One of the ladies will start quietly and the rest of the congregation will join in.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall; music will follow.

A bit of humor submitted by **LLOYD "BREEZY" BOREN**, 65th Bombardier from San Antonio, TX.

Man does not live by words alone; despite the fact that sometimes he has to eat them.

Science has discovered why bees hum - they don't know the words.

A man walked up to an airline counter and said, "I'm going to San Francisco, and I want you to send this bag to Los Angeles and send this one to Denver." The clerk replied, "Oh, sir, we can't do that." The man replied, "Why not? You did it last week?"

Now that everyone is in a jovial mood, sit back and think about this. In contact via e-mail with **LARRY HICKEY**, Associate member and author of our history, he writes that he is "... up to my ears 18 hours a day in publication problems ... I'll let you know where things stand ASAP. Obviously it is not out yet, despite the advertisements to the contrary by some book companies. It is coming, however!"

You will have to make your own interpretation of his remarks. When this edition went to press, that was the last we heard from LARRY.

A bit of advice from those who run the registration desk at the reunions:

BRING YOUR NAME TAG WITH YOU TO THE REUNION.

Those who work at registration at the reunions say that we are running out of name tags since so many members forget to bring along their name tags. The supply is now very limited. Thanks for your cooperation.

The **Newsletter** is published 4 times each year - **January, April, July and October**. If you have any news which you want in the Newsletter, please have it in the editors' hands **absolutely no later than the 15th of the month before publication.** Dues (**\$15 Per Year or \$100 Life**) may be sent directly to **BILL WILSON**, Treasurer, or to **JIM CHERKAUER**, Secretary. (Addresses are at the beginning of the Newsletter.) Make the check out to **43rd Bomb Group Assoc.** Check the mailing label on this edition to find out your status with respect to paid up dues. The Association's fiscal year is the same as the calendar year. You may send E-Mail to the secretary/editor at:

cherrj@buffnet.net

The Post Office department will not forward the Newsletter. If you have a change of address, send **BILL WILSON** this change **as soon as possible.**

1998 REUNION ADVANCE NEWS
43rd BOMB GROUP ASSOC. 18th ANNUAL REUNION
SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01115

The 1998 Reunion will be held at the Springfield Marriott Hotel on the corner of Boland And Columbus Ave., Springfield, MA. (Map and directions in a future newsletter.) If you arrive by Air (Bradley International, Windsor Locks, Connecticut) take the Airport Express to the Hotel. Distance is approximately 20 miles. The current fee for this service is \$11.95 per person, or you may hire a cab, 3 people, for \$30.00 total.

The Springfield Marriott is the finest Hotel in the city with excellent accommodations and meeting rooms for all of our activities. Numerous shops and restaurants are within the Complex with many more easily accessible by City Bus. Indoor Parking (not owned by Marriott) connects to the Hotel. Cost is \$7.00 a day with unlimited access to your car any time, day or night. R.V. Parking (no facilities) is adjacent to the Hotel.

The room rate is **\$74.00** a night - single, double, triple or quad - excluding tax. For reservations call **1-800-228-9290** or mail in the Hotel Reservation Form included in this Newsletter. Be sure to tell them that you will be attending the 43rd Bomb Group Reunion.

The Reunion Registration Form is also included in this Newsletter. This year the Reunion Fee is **\$105.00** per person. So that we will know how many to plan for, **PLEASE** fill out this form and, with the Reunion Fee, mail it to:

Russ Burnett P.O. Box 126,
Conway, MA 01341-0126.

A rundown of some of the scheduled events for Friday include a bus trip North to the Yankee Candle Scenter, said to be the largest candle store in North America, which features a Bavarian Village and antique auto museum. Then a guided bus tour through Historic Old Deerfield. We will have lunch at Westover A.R.B. and, if world conditions allow, there will be a C-5 on static display for us as well as possible other aircraft. Then back to the Hotel for Entertainment and a real old fashioned New England Dinner for the evening.

Some **optional** tours we have planned include: Old Sturbridge Village; Rural New England Village; New England Air Museum, largest in New England, at Bradley Field, Conn.; and Norman Rockwell Museum. These are all half day trips. Plans are being made for a Boston trip which would be all day. More details later.

Listed below are some of the points of interest. Most are accessible by City Bus. They are: Springfield Armory Museum; Basketball Hall of Fame; Indian Motorcycle Museum; Volleyball Hall of Fame, at Holyoke; and Smith and Wesson, factory tour, museum shooting range; as well as numerous other museums including The Museum of Fine Arts. You will want to come early to enjoy the many things we have to offer.

We look forward to seeing you in Springfield.

Bob Watson
Reunion Coordinator

Russ Burnett
Reunion Chairman