



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



NEWSLETTER 70th EDITION  
APRIL 1999

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

If my crocuses and the robins know anything, spring is fast approaching here in Pennsylvania. I trust that you feel like I do, it's a joy to see another favorite season.

Recently there has been a big interest in World War II fueled by movies like *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Thin Red Line*. Educators report young people are coming to class with questions about the war. Tom Brokaw's book, *The Greatest Generation*, is a best seller and NBC ran a special with people who had been interviewed for the book. I read the book and recommend it to all of you. It's estimated that about 1,000 of us survivors are leaving the ranks daily. I'm happy to hear the stories are being told. The *Wall Street Journal* recently listed nineteen web sites for information on WW II. A good first step is the Un. of North Carolina's WW II resource site <<http://metalab.unc.edu/pha/>>.

Our web site operator, **TRACY TUCCIARONE**, is doing a super job, continually fine-tuning the site. I encourage you all to go to your library or to a relative who has an Internet connection. Its address is <<http://members.aol.com/kens43rd/>>. You'll be amazed and proud of what you find. It is labor of love for **TRACY**. As your President, I am taking the prerogative of making her a lifetime associate member of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Assn. In addition I declare her the "Sweetheart of the 43<sup>rd</sup>."

I just heard from **FRED HAGEN**'s secretary that he has gone on another sojourn to New Guinea to survey the B-17 designated "Swamp Ghost." It is located in the Agaraimbo swamp in Popondetta, P.N.G.

I have just approved the final proof copy of our Springfield, MA, photo album. It was quite a job making sure the faces match the names. I remember most faces, but a few are guesses, good ones, I hope. The album should arrive at your homes before this newsletter does, if the Dunning Co. delivers as promised.

Helen and I are planning our delayed trip to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji this March. I learned **JIM MURPHY** and his wife, **MICKEY**, are leaving on a cruise from Sydney while we're there. We hope to have steak and eggs (!?) or cocktails together.

Hope all is well with you. I'll look forward to reading your news later in this newsletter.

In a development after composing my report above, I have had an acceptance by **ELDON "BUD" LAWSON** to serve as our Group Historian. My thanks to you **BUD** for accepting this responsibility. I am sure that you will do an excellent and thorough job.

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

**ELVA I. KINKAID** writes to inform us that **CLEMENT C. KINKAID**, 64<sup>th</sup> from Valley Center, KS, died on December 28, 1998, after a bout with liver cancer. She has had to move into a retirement complex in Wichita. We are sorry to hear this sad news. May God Bless.

Her new address is 1613 May Apt 6, Wichita, KS 67213-3572. Phone 316-264-7987.

The 20<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION FALL 1998 NEWSLETTER contains an article by Lt. Gen. James V. Edmundson, USAF, Ret. entitled "THERE WERE NO JAPANESE ATROCITIES?" The editor thought that his words are ever so appropriate today. He writes:

I mention this because a sizeable group of academic revisionists insist on re-writing the history of WW II in the Pacific and are teaching it to your youngsters. They surfaced about the time the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum was planning its exhibit of Enola Gay, the B-29 from which The Bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Their intended message was that, in the Pacific War, Americans were rampaging aggressors while the Japanese were merely trying to preserve their national culture. The advocates were born after the war, lack direct knowledge of what happened there, and yet are convinced that their interpretation of history is correct.

December 7 is always a good time to review a few irrefutable events of World War II.

More than 30,000 cases of rape, torture, murder and plunder in Shanghai, during the war, are a matter of record. In a 4-month orgy known as the Rape of Nanking, torture and murder claimed the lives of 200,000 Chinese. In Manchuria, 12,000 people were grotesquely killed, as human guinea pigs in Japanese germ warfare tests. Their scorched earth policy in North China killed 19 million Chinese civilians. On the Bataan Death March, 650 prisoners died and 1,600 more later died in Camp O'Donnell. In building the railroad between Ban Pong, Thailand and Burma, 12,000 Allied POWs and 30,000 Asians died, working as slave labor. In the Sook Ching Operation, 50,000 ethnic Chinese were massacred in Malaya and Singapore. In a blood lust of defeat the Japanese sacked Manila and butchered 1000 Filipino civilians. These are provable facts that our revisionists want to sweep under the rug.

I am personally aware of another event that has received no public notice, but demonstrates who the real racists--and butchers--were in that war. The B-29 group I commanded was stationed on the island of Tinian during the war's final months. Several years ago, some of our members went back to Tinian and, at the invitation of the local government, dedicated a monument to the Americans who lost their lives flying from there. It was a colorful ceremony. But our people saw another monument on Tinian, placed by the Republic of Korea, to commemorate the 5,000 Korean civilians who had been taken to Tinian by the Japanese as slave labor, mostly to cut sugar cane. Once it became obvious to the Japanese that the Americans were about to land on Tinian, they summarily executed the 5,000 Koreans, to prevent their ever helping Americans.

These are not nice stories, but are true and documented, and while it seems a shame to bring them up now that Japan is a Free World ally, they deserve re-telling so long as our brilliant young professors insist that we were the bad guys in that long-ago war.

As we promised in the January Newsletter here is a very interesting and we believe related couple of incidences sent to our President **SAM COMMONS**, 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Engineer.

First, from **RICHARD J. MROWINSKI**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Armorer Gunner from West Allis, WI, is a copy of a newspaper article from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel dated December 6, 1998. It is about the burial at Arlington National Cemetery of **TECH. SGT. DELMAR DOTSON** and other members of the same B-17 crew killed when the plane crashed during a storm on New Guinea on Sept. 15, 1943. The plane was discovered a few years ago. After painstaking research, a DNA match was made between a leg bone found at the scene of the crash and the former first lady of Wisconsin, Carrie Lee

Nelson, a younger sister of DELMAR DOTSON. She is the last surviving member of a family of 10 siblings raised in Virginia. DELMAR joined the Army Air Corps in Richmond, VA, in 1937. He left the service but rejoined after WW II began.

The B-17 had flown on a mission from Jackson Field near Port Moresby, New Guinea, to Lae. After a successful bomb run, the plane headed back home but crashed while attempting to cross over the Owen Stanley Mountains.

[RICHARD, the editor, his wife and our Wisconsin relatives from New Berlin and Richfield had dinner in West Allis last December 22<sup>nd</sup>. That was before you were belted with some 28" of snow in early January 1999.]

Second, in the next day's mail, SAM received a copy of a newspaper article from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette dated Monday, December 7, 1998. This came from JOSEPH R. JANCOSKO, 64<sup>th</sup> from Pittsburgh, PA. The article tells of a Staff Sgt. TED McCARTNEY of Bellevue, PA, to be buried on Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors 55 years after his B-17 Flying Fortress crashed into a New Guinea mountain while returning from a WW II bombing mission. Both TED and a brother, BOB, were killed in WW II. Their mother had asked the War Department to relieve a third son CHUCK from duty with the Army Signal Corps in Italy after BOB was killed in the Battle of the Bulge in Europe. The request was denied as a younger son, BILL, was living at home too young for WW II. He did serve in Korea though. TED is survived by 3 sisters as well as CHUCK and BILL.

The article goes on to say that in Sept. 1993, nearly 50 years to the day, CHUCK was astonished to find that TED's plane wreckage had been spotted by a helicopter pilot in October 1992.

JANICE OLSON, Associate member from Apple Valley, CA, scavenged the site a few months later. This is the wreck from which she traced down the widow of Lt. HOWARD EBERLY, Pilot of the B-17. CHUCK McCARTNEY saw Janice on "Good Morning America" and knew that his brother's plane had been found. Janice has presented at a reunion of our Association, the story of this finding and tracing down the widow of the pilot.

After a 10-year painstaking analysis of all of the evidence, the army did identify the remains of all 11 men found with the wreck. The findings were presented, about 2 weeks before the military funeral was held, to the surviving family members that could be located. About 150 relatives of these men were at the services. Most of them had never met the heroes being honored.

As SAM says, "It sounds like these two men were on the same plane."

In February a large package of materials arrived from ELDON "BUD" LAWSON, 65<sup>th</sup> Bombardier from Bay Village, OH. In these materials were a couple of articles about the same crew and the burial of their remains in Arlington National Cemetery. One was the article from the "Pittsburgh Post Gazette." The second was from the "Plain Dealer Reporter" an Ohio paper. It told of the finding of the plane including the remains of Sgt. JENNINGS C. MESSER Assistant Flight Engineer on that B-17. His half-sister, GRACIE BLOCK of Cleveland, found out about JENNINGS through a newspaper article in her hometown newspaper, the "Williamson Daily News" from W. Virginia.

This article listed the names of all the other men aboard the plane: First Lt. HOWARD G. EBERLY, Pilot from Portland, OR; S/Sgt. THEODORE J. McCARTNEY of Bellevue, PA; Second Lt. EDGAR L. TOWNSEND Jr.; Second Lt. GEORGE L. STACY; Second Lt. CHARLES E. RANKER; T/Sgt. DELMAR DOTSON; S/Sgt. JOSEPH FERRAILOLO; S/Sgt. WATSON C. HALL; Sgt. ARTHUR JINGOZIAN and Sgt. PETER S. OWENS.

BUD's material included a newspaper photo of the horse drawn caisson and honor guard marching with it at Arlington National Cemetery. It also included a photo of GRACIE BLOCK, 82, holding the ceremonial burial flag's wooden box, displaying JENNING's campaign ribbons and flight engineer's wings.

**ROBERT "BOB" ROTH**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Gunner from Redlands, CA, writes that he met a most interesting person at the Springfield reunion. He says that **PAUL L. NICHOLS**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Picayune, MS, began his tour in the 43<sup>rd</sup> as a Copilot flying his first mission from Nadzab and his second from Owi. He flew his last mission as a first pilot from Clark Field to Shingkikiku, Formosa in April 1945.

BOB was on the crew of **ZASTROW**. They joined the 43<sup>rd</sup> at Port Moresby during the last of the B-17 era and came home when the 43<sup>rd</sup> moved to Owi. He writes "We heard stories about the 'old days,' but only knew what we read in the newsletters or heard at the reunions about the 43<sup>rd</sup> after we came home."

PAUL told BOB that he had written a book about his life for his heirs. He has some extra copies that he sells for the cost of printing, \$20.00.

Bob says that upon returning home from the reunion he had a delay en route. When he arrived home, he was pleasantly surprised to find a 128-page book entitled *MY LUCKY DICE* waiting for him. He says the book is written in large print that is easy on old eyes, contains many pictures and drawings by the artist author. It also contains details of many of his missions. "He must have kept a detailed diary, which most of us did not do.

BOB also asks that we change his phone number to 909-792-7488.

He hopes to see us all at Tucson in 1999.

[PAUL has his book posted on the 43<sup>rd</sup> web site. You may order a copy from him direct:

**PAUL L. NICHOLS, P.O. BOX 151, PICAYUNE, MS 39446. Cost is \$20.00]**

**RALPH R. RAVENBURG**, Adjutant, is trying to locate anyone in the 43<sup>rd</sup> who also served in the 25<sup>th</sup> Bomb Sqdn. out of France Field in the Canal Zone in 1941 or out of Salinas, Ecuador in 1942. The editor is aware that several men came from the 6<sup>th</sup> AAF to the 5<sup>th</sup> AAF, as did he, so there may be some of you who RALPH is attempting to contact about a planned reunion. His address is

5000 Timberline Dr., Austin, TX 78746-5537. Phone 512-327-0565.

**JOHN STEPHENSON**, 34 Strathearn Rd., Leura, NSW 2780, Australia, contacted **LLOYD "BREEZY" BOREN**, 65<sup>th</sup> Bombardier from San Antonio, TX. JOHN is trying to locate **FRANK BUNTING**, 43<sup>rd</sup>, with whom he has lost contact. If you are out there FRANK, please contact JOHN. If any of you knows the whereabouts of FRANK, would you let him know about this request?

A Christmas note from **DOLLY** and **BYRLE MILLER**, 64<sup>th</sup> Radio Operator from Zachary, LA, tells that they enjoyed a trip to Gatlinburg, TN, sometime after the reunion in Springfield. Then they had a week of golfing, their favorite pastime, with friends.

**EDWARD L. GAMMILL**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Aircraft Maintenance from Phoenix, AZ, sent an informative letter about his meeting **ERNIE VANDAL**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Crew Chief and Artist, who applied his talent to paint nose art on many of the 63<sup>rd</sup> B-17s.

ED writes that ERNIE made only one reunion, the QM2 in Anaheim, CA, in 1992. He says that it was "... a real pleasure having him and his daughter [Frances] for this one [reunion] that was near his home." They had a great time together and shared a tad of Jack Daniels while recalling the great times that had together in the 43<sup>rd</sup>. In reply to his Christmas card to ERNIE, he received a very beautiful and touching letter from FRANCES.

FRANCES reported that her father, ERNIE, passed away on October 1, 1995, after a long bout with Alzheimer's and after the passing of his wife, **MARY**, in 1991. She goes on to write that she recalls meeting ED and **LOUIS MIKLOS, Jr.**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Aircraft Maintenance from Stratford, CT, in the Disneyland Hotel that year. It really made ERNIE's day, which was both his and her birthday.

FRANCES related a touching incident in her letter we will repeat here.

We were at the cemetery waiting for a color guard to show up. The priest had given his final blessing and the casket was draped with the American Flag. As we were all standing there, a

gust of wind picked up and began twisting leaves and grass clippings round and round. All of a sudden, the wind grabbed the flag on my Dad's coffin and blew it up in the air. Several of us reached out to keep the flag from touching the ground. Just as suddenly, the wind changed direction and blew the flag onto me, entirely wrapping me up in it like a big blanket. Well, I felt that was a sign from my father, kind of a thank you and good-bye. I took care of him as his Alzheimer's progressed and worsened. So often he was unable to tell me what he needed. I just had to guess. The incident with the flag was Dad's way of showing his thanks and that he was okay now.

E-mail from Paul Vasconi, Volunteer coordinator for the Collings Foundation in Florida, indicates that he is supervising the painting of their B-24J the *ALL AMERICAN* as the 64<sup>th</sup>'s *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. At the time in early January the plane was Brooksville, FL, about 40 miles north of Tampa. The artwork was to be done by American Aero Services, New Smyrna Beach Airport just south of Daytona Beach. He is arranging the Florida leg of the 1999 tour of the plane. Anyone interested in seeing the plane should contact him for a schedule of where it will be and when. He gave only an e-mail address - <worldair@iu.net>. He also wants to know what if anything was painted on the pilot's side of the 64<sup>th</sup>'s plane. If anyone knows the answer to that, please contact Paul or the editor who will relay the information on. [See a later article in this edition.]

Additional e-mail brings this request from Daniel L. Johnson. He was using the Internet to help Robert Brownfield find out any information regarding his grandfather, **ALBERT BROWNFIELD**. All they know is that ALBERT, a pilot, flew B-17s and B-24s in the SW Pacific. Daniel writes that he knows that the 43<sup>rd</sup> was the only Group to fly both planes, so he was hoping someone reading this would remember ALBERT. On one of the B-24 web sites, the editor noticed that Robert had posted a notice of inquiry also. Again all the editor has is an e-mail address - <spit12@mindspring.com>.

Remitting dues for 2 years is **CHARLES FARHA**, Headquarters Intelligence from Rockledge, FL. He writes that he had wanted to make the Springfield reunion, but he was recovering slowly from an attack of diverticulitis, which he says was a "... rough baddie." He spent a couple of days in the hospital while the doctors ran tests to find the problem.

**CHARLIE** found the article about **SAMUEL F. COMMONS**, 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Engineer and President, finally being awarded the DFC very interesting. **CHARLIE** says SAM richly deserved the award. He vaguely remembers being on the runway area when SAM's plane came in all shot up.

Since he worked in Intelligence, **CHARLIE** says that he has lots of aerial photos of bombing missions as well as special orders he would like to pass on for historical reasons. [**CHARLIE**, our President SAM has appointed an historian for our association. The editor has been collecting all sorts of materials, which he is filing under Historical Materials. Anything that you have and want to part with, could go with these. They will be passed on to our historian soon. Some of the photos and such can be scanned and passed on to **E. TRACY TUCCIARONE**, an Associate member and creator of a web site dedicated to the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG, to be added to the history section of that site. As reported in the last Newsletter the URL of the site is <<http://members.aol.com/kens43rd/>>.]

He hopes to make it to the Tucson reunion. He thanks all who help in keeping our association members informed of happenings and events of the past, and sends his blessings to all.

Along with his dues plus a little more to help pay Association expenses, **GEORGE J. CARTER**, Headquarters from Creamridge, NJ, said that he had received several acknowledgements from association members regarding his diary of the passage of the Queen Mary from Boston to Sydney which ran for 3 issues of this Newsletter.

While reading the April 1998 edition of the Newsletter George remembered the incident of the Japanese mini-submarine entering Sydney Harbor, but he recalls that the incident took place in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of May 1942 and not January. George says that he knows the date as he had a ringside seat.

"Early Sunday morning I was aboard the last harbor ferry from Manly Beach to Sydney Quay. When the darkness erupted in explosions and bright searchlights. Fortunately the ferry was nearing the quay and not in the middle of the harbor. The Sydney newspapers reported the sub was after the cruiser U.S.S. Chicago but torpedoed an Australian training vessel instead. The Chicago was in port for repairs following the Coral Sea Battle."

George was also interested in the item about **JOE HEUSTON**, 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Engineer from Cohasset, MA, telling of his voyage home via Milne Bay. **GEORGE** wants to know if you went home in a Dutch ship named "Tabinta" on June 10, 1944 and arrived 21 days later at Angel Island in San Francisco Bay? If so, **GEORGE** was aboard that ship too. He recalls also sailing during a violent storm that might have been a typhoon.

**GEORGE** says that after arriving in the States and following a home leave, he was assigned to the 104<sup>th</sup> Army Airways Communications System headquartered at Langley Field.

He also appreciates the time and efforts made by all in producing our quarterly newsletter.

In a letter to **SAM**, **GEORGE** sends **SAM** his "Sincerest of congratulations for your belated 'Distinguished Flying Cross' award. Heroes are made not born. I can only rejoice with you."

You should recall that it was **GEORGE**'s diary that ran for 3 issues of the Newsletter recently.

George really wanted to attend the reunion in Springfield, but he is suffering from "leukemia which is an on and off pestiferous critter, disrupting many of our plans." He and **HELEN**, with God's Grace and his friends' inspiration are looking forward to the Tucson reunion.

We will pray for you George and may your illness be in remission for a long, long time.

An item that should be of interest to you who have access to the Internet is a picture of nose art being painted on B-24 *BLACK MAGIC* by **ANNETTE (TONI) ROBIN**, Red Cross worker and commercial artist. It is on the web site for the 43<sup>rd</sup> and was submitted by **VINCENT DiGILIO** son of **JOSEPH DiGILIO**, Nose Gunner on that 43<sup>rd</sup> plane.

**JOE C. COX, Sr.**, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Austin, TX, sent **VINCENT** e-mail telling him that **JOE COX**'s crew of 10 men included a **JOSEPH (NMI) DiGILIO** as the Nose Gunner. The crew served in the 64<sup>th</sup> from mid July 1943 until July 1944. The orders (dated 16 Jan 1944) awarding **DiGILIO** the DFC gave a home address of 219 East 29<sup>th</sup> St., New York City. The mother's name is listed as Mrs. Lucy DiGilio. **JOE** tells **VINCENT** that if this **DiGILIO** is his father, he has reason to be proud of him as he was "... one hell of a gunner, a fine man and a valued friend." **JOE COX** sent a copy of this e-mail to the editor.

The sad news of the passing of **HOWARD WAUGH, Jr.**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Navigator from Freeland, MD, comes from his wife **JANE B.** She enclosed a lengthy obituary showing that **HOWARD** was a very active person. She says that he was proud of his military service, remained in the reserves and retired as a Lt. Col. in 1969. **HOWARD** flew 46 missions with the Mareeba Butchers and earned several military medals and awards. God Bless.

Posted on the WWWBoard B-24 web site Jan. 28, 1999 is a notice from Ken Keisling. He is seeking information on his uncle, S/Sgt **JOHN HRYWNAK**, who served in the 403<sup>rd</sup> from Seven Mile Airdrome, Port Moresby, New Guinea, and who was KIA on Sept. 7, 1943. Ken wants to find out what missions his uncle flew and in particular any details known about the mission on which he was shot down.

Ken left no address of any sort, but if anyone has information he could share with Ken, send it to the editor who should be able to contact Ken through that web site.

E-mail from M. L. "SHAD" SHADDOX, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Friendswood, TX, informs me that JOE PAGANI, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Orange, CA, is trying to get hold of me. JOE and his crew joined the 64<sup>th</sup> on 13<sup>th</sup> of February 1943 at Darwin. His copilot was BILL CULLER and PATRICK SHIRLEY was his Bombardier. JOE has forgotten the rest of the crew but is working on recalling them. They flew 100 missions and left the squadron from Ie Shima when they went to Clark Field in late September and flew a new B-24 home. JOE has worked in the aerospace industry until he retired. He worked with General Dynamics in the missile field. He then went into the field of computers and founded his own company which used software he had written to analyze designs for all of the major computer companies in the country as well as the military services and other digital houses. He closed shop in 1990.

The secretary contacted JOE and invited him to become a member of our association.

His e-mail address is <drjoe@pacbell.net>. His snail mail address is 1114 West Palm Ave., Orange, CA 92868. His phone is 714-997-4312. [The editor is still not able to receive e-mail from JOE as of mid March. My local server has contacted JOE and the connection worked fine. The problem is unresolved. JOE has sent the editor snail mail and has joined the Association.]

JOE recalls one strike in particular to Taipei capital of Formosa. He believes that the mission was in retaliation for the Japs sinking a Hospital Ship. "The Flak was extremely heavy. It seemed like they were shooting at us from the time we sighted the southern coast until we reached Taipei. We were the lead ship, in the 64<sup>th</sup>'s Squadron of 4 ships, and we followed the 65<sup>th</sup> over the target. Thirteen thousand feet. Extremely heavy Flak. One of the 65<sup>th</sup>'s ships took a direct hit and the wing folded. Nobody got out. But as soon as the ship was hit, all the Flak stopped. They actually stopped shooting ... not a shot was fired as we made our run over the target." Joe wants to know if the editor remembers that mission.

[The editor does not, but does recall that the 65<sup>th</sup> lost a plane on a mission to Taipei on June 13, 1945. The pilot was Lt. DONALD CAMPBELL. Reports gathered after the war indicated that Don and crew bailed out and were taken prisoners and executed by the Japanese. Could these incidents be one and the same?]

JOE and his wife, CAROLYN, flew to Florida for the unveiling of *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*, the original of which he had flown on several missions in the 64<sup>th</sup>. The plane did not make it from Brooksville, FL, as scheduled on March 11th. So PAUL VASCONI flew them in his 1959 Cessna 182 to Brooksville to see the plane in all of its new splendor. JOE e-mailed the editor a beautiful color picture of him in the copilot's seat with that big dragon and the poor maiden in his clutches so prominently displayed on the right side of the B-24. The editor trusts that JOE has sent a copy to TRACY for the web site. JOE reports that he found it boring to pilot the Cessna part way back to Melbourne after piloting B-24s.

After receiving his January Newsletter, SHAD SHADDOX sent this message to the editor and asked that it appear in the Newsletter.

I just got the January Newsletter today. (Jan. 29<sup>th</sup>) As usual, I spent a great deal of time reading it. And, as usual, I am impressed with the quality of your and Bill Wilson's work. Please accept my thanks for the care that you take in writing our Newsletter. I intend to get a letter off to our "Favorite Used Car Salesman" for his part in this undertaking, but I will appreciate it if you will mention this in the next Newsletter.

Our President SAM COMMONS received a letter of thanks from VINCENT C. STOPCZYNSKI, Headquarters from Kingston, NY, for sending him the reunion cap and tape of the presentation by ALFRED HAGEN, Associate member from Philadelphia, PA. He says that the tape is very well done and those to whom he shows it all agree. He says that he wears the 43<sup>rd</sup> cap.

He also sent along a copy of the 1987 "Readers Digest" containing an article on the late JOSE HOLGUIN and his last mission. The story in that article has appeared in the Newsletter in past editions. The secretary will file this in the file of historical materials he is collecting for the association.

SAM and HELEN COMMONS headed to Australia, New Zealand and Fiji on or about March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The status of our history book is certain to be raised again as mail arrives after members read the January 1999 edition of the Newsletter. The secretary/editor failed to get any response from the author, **LAWRENCE J. HICKEY** Associate member from Boulder, CO, about the book and the progress being made towards its publication. He will try again and hopefully will have some news to report to you in this edition of the Newsletter.

E-mail from **STANLEY "BILL" SCHIRMER**, 65<sup>th</sup> Maintenance from Walla Walla, WA, informed the editor that the 1953 film "ABOVE AND BEYOND" featuring Robert Taylor was available on VHS cassette through Amazon Com on the Internet for \$16.00. It is the story of Col. Paul Tibbets and his crew training for the drop of the A-bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. It was filmed at Davis-Montham AF Base. It is well made and is similar to a documentary. The SAC 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group is featured for a brief time at the beginning of the film. Of course this was in its B-29 era. BILL was in the 43<sup>rd</sup> from 1946 - 1949. He has ordered the video and will give the editor an evaluation of it after he receives and views it.

Well, STANLEY reports the film is a disappointment. He did not find the 43<sup>rd</sup> or Davis-Montham AFB being mentioned at all. It was very much like the typical WW II love stories. It did show the strict security surrounding the project and how it affected the Tibbets family. Most of the film was done at MGM studios in Culver City CA. There is some excellent footage of B-29s in the movie. He did not find the 43<sup>rd</sup> featured in the movie. You can put your checkbooks away. Stanley's e-mail address is <blue-bird@bmi.net>.

**BOB LIVINGSTONE**, Associate member and writer from Australia, writes that he noticed that the Newsletter mentioned that Turner Publishing has reprinted some copies of the 90<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group's history.

He says that Turner has finally published his book, *UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS: The B-24 in the South Pacific*. The cost is \$49.95 each plus \$6.00 for S&H. A plastic protective cover is \$3.75. Kentucky residents must add 6% sales tax.

BOB says that the 43<sup>rd</sup> is mentioned only briefly in the book as the unit that first provided the Royal Australian Air Force crews with their combat initiation in the B-24. The book does show how the B-24 fitted into the overall picture of the war in the lower Pacific area.

His book covers the 7BG/19BG LB-30s in Java and Australia and the first B-24As in combat. It also covers the 90<sup>th</sup> BG, RAAF beginnings with ex 5<sup>th</sup> AAF B-24Ds, the 380<sup>th</sup> BG, Consairway, Air Transport Command, QANTAAS, RAF Air Transport Command, United Airlines and the Dutch. He covers RAAF POW flights as well as post-war uses of the B-24. The book includes over 250 photos; many never before published.

This may be a book many of you are interested in. The Turner Publishing Company is located at P.O. Box 3101, Paducah, KY 42002-3101. The phone is 1-800-788-3350. The e-mail address is <turnerpc@apex.net>.

The deadline to submit stories or other materials for the *HISTORY OF THE 19<sup>th</sup> BOMB GROUP* is April 30, 1999. Please send to Turner Publishing Company at the above address. You may order your copy of the book at the same address. The standard edition is \$52.50 and the deluxe leather is \$89.00.

Writing for herself and **ROBERT L. SCHULTZ**, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Loveland, OH, **HELEN L. GREEN**, widow of **FRANK** of the 63<sup>rd</sup> and from Dayton, WA, says that she and BOB enjoyed the last reunion. She found it very beautiful in New England, and sends her thanks to **JANE** and **RUSS BURNETT**, 64<sup>th</sup> Flight Engineer from Conway, MA, our hosts at Springfield, for all of the work they did to make the reunion such a success.

She says that the weather for BOB in Ohio has been bad at times, but he spent Christmas in Washington with her family of 17.

HELEN has been having eye problems and had two laser treatments. She is hoping for a total knee replacement on Feb. 11th. When she wrote on Jan. 19th, they were enjoying 50-degree weather. She says she has a sister in Allegany, New York. That is a beautiful section area of Western New York. From the Internet comes a plea from MICHAEL SULLIVAN, from Shenandoah, PA, for help in learning anything he can about his father, MICHAEL J. SULLIVAN, who served as a tail gunner in the 65<sup>th</sup>. His father died in 1979. If you have access to the Internet, his address is <sully1229@email.msn>.

The 90<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Assoc. is holding its annual national reunion in Oklahoma City, OK from September 29<sup>th</sup> to October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Hosts are Bob and Ireleen Simmons, 3309 Preston Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73122. Phone 405-947-7681.

Mentioned earlier in this issue was a package of materials arriving from BUD LAWSON. It seems that BUD has been the recipient of several letters about the article that appeared in this Newsletter No. 66, April 1998. Sgt. WILLIAM WARREN, 63<sup>rd</sup>, had published an article in which he claimed to be in the first plane landing in Japan after the cessation of hostilities on August 28, 1945 at Atsugi Airdrome. This Newsletter repeated the article sent to us by BUD. [Sgt. WARREN has since said that this was on or after Aug. 28, 1945.] Our own 43<sup>rd</sup> CO, Col. JAMES T. PETTUS, Pilot from Honolulu, HI, had said that there was an error in that article as he was aboard the first plane to officially land at Atsugi on that date.

To make a long story considerably shorter, BUD has received letters from several men who flew into Atsugi on that date of August 28, 1945, or were members of groups which participated in that eventful day. A letter from BOB MONSON of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Troop Carrier SQDN includes a copy of a letter to the editor of the AFMF Newsletter, dated Nov. 2, 1997, by Col. THOMAS S. RYAN. RYAN states that the first aircraft to land at Atsugi was a C-47 piloted by Col. JOHN LACKEY, JR. 0-25197, CO of the 54<sup>th</sup> Troop Carrier Wing. The Co-Pilot was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. TOM K. SMITH.

LACKEY's plane was the first of 14 C-47s to land. These were followed by 15 C-46s and one B-17. All of these planes took off from Okinawa. A group of 15 C-54s of ATC were to follow these other planes such that the first of them would land 5 minutes after the B-17 had landed.

A copy of the SECRET orders issued by HEADQUARTERS, FIFTH AIR FORCE, APO 710, and by authority of CG, FAF, 24 August 1945 had been sent to BUD. It lists the 12 officers in the advance reconnaissance party. Number 3 on the list is Col. Pettus, V Bomcom. Col. Lackey is also on the list, but 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Tom Smith is not. The orders go on to specify, "The advance operations party will install operations facilities and prepare to receive two (2) days thereafter on Z-Day approximately one hundred fifty (150) each B-24's and one hundred fifty (150) each C-54s each day."

Also included in the letters to BUD are references to the claim by a couple of P-38 pilots that they and a B-17, needed to refuel one of the P-38s, landed in Japan a few days prior to August 28, 1945. These claims have received rather widespread coverage on the Internet lately, as well as in a number of books about the war in the Pacific. Some historians are skeptical about this claim.

Finally, BUD sent three black & white copies of color photos of B-24 nose art he made from Martin Bowman's book *THE B-24 LIBERATOR 1939-1945*. These are of *MABEL'S LABELS*, a 43<sup>rd</sup> plane, *THE GOON*, a 308<sup>th</sup> BG 14<sup>th</sup> AAF in China, and *COCKTAIL HOUR*, another 43<sup>rd</sup> aircraft. The editor will file the two of these along with all of his other material under "43<sup>rd</sup> History."

Late in January the secretary/editor received a long letter from H. GLEN CONWAY, 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Engineer from Rome, GA. He had seen an article by yours truly published in a previous edition of "The Briefing," a publication devoted exclusively to the B-24 and all variations of it by the AAF, the Navy and England. GLEN had no idea that the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Assoc. existed and sent the letter as he felt that

our paths must have crossed somewhere since he came from the 6<sup>th</sup> AAF and went to the 65<sup>th</sup> on the crew of **MAX WILLIAMS**, Pilot, Operations Officer and CO of the 65<sup>th</sup>.

Little did he know that the men and experiences described in "The Briefing" and which took place in Tonapah, NV, included him. We came from the 6<sup>th</sup> AAF together and went to Tonapah together and then on to eventually serve in the 65<sup>th</sup>. In fact, we flew from Nadzab, New Guinea, to Clark Field on the same C-46, but we probably never met formally or informally in that time.

After sending GLEN a letter with excerpts from orders that included both of our crews, the editor phoned GLEN. We exchanged many stories about our experiences at Tonopah and in the 65<sup>th</sup> including a mission to Kobi, Formosa, on June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1945 when MAX landed his new B-24 at Clark with all engines feathered. The plane had run out of gas. Glen said he was trying to transfer any remaining fuel to engine #3 when he saw trees ahead. He ducked to the deck pushing the observer and British Air Marshall down at the same time. When he heard the tires squeal as they touched the runway, he was relieved to say the least.

GLEN reported that MAX had passed on a few years back. He tried to keep track of the crew over the years. As far as he knows, he is the lone survivor of the crew. Since the editor joined the 43<sup>rd</sup> Assoc., there have been inquiries about what happened to our various COs. Max was the last CO of the 65<sup>th</sup> during WW II. He was still serving as CO when the editor left Ie Shima for the States in late Oct. 1945.

The secretary/editor is working on getting GLEN to join our Association. He attends the reunions of the 74<sup>th</sup> Squadron of the 6<sup>th</sup> AAF that was headquartered in Panama during the war. Many of our men came through the 6<sup>th</sup> AAF to the 5<sup>th</sup>. In fact, the original 19<sup>th</sup> BG came from the 6<sup>th</sup> AAF.

A phone message came from **NEIL R. FAIRBANKS**, 403<sup>rd</sup> from Anoka, MN. NEIL was reporting that **GILBERT E. SENA**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Bombardier from Santa Fe, NM, was in the VA Hospital in Albuquerque, NM, recovering from a stroke. NEIL said that GIL was coming along satisfactorily, but that he thought GIL would welcome some cards or messages from his buddies in the Association. GIL and his wife, **REYES**, attended the Albuquerque reunion.

On page 9 of the January issue of the Newsletter there was a request by Jennifer Draper with regard to information about Sgt. **MEYER LEVIN**. Only one other article in the Newsletter since this editor took it over has elicited more response than has this request. The editor apologizes to those of you who tried to contact Jennifer Draper via e-mail. The address given in that article was off a bit. Here it is shown correctly: <jenniferd@hotmail.com>. The editor's error was caught by at least two of our members including 64<sup>th</sup> Navigator, **GEORGE F. SICKINGER** from West End, NC. He tried to send information to Jennifer, but got the wrong person due to the error. Her land address is 42 Smallburn Ave., Newborough 3825, Victoria, Australia.

A number of stories concerning MEYER follow. They are not in total agreement, but in general the stories are saying the same thing. This man was one of the best bombardiers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Groups and a true hero.

Early in February a phone call from **JOHN H. PICKERING**, 19<sup>th</sup> BG & 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Punta Gorda, FL, informed the editor that he had information about **MEYER LEVIN**, 19<sup>th</sup> BG & 64<sup>th</sup> Bombardier. JOHN says that he first met Sgt. LEVIN as a member of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Sqd. 19<sup>th</sup> BG in Longreach, Australia, around June of 1942. MARVIN had been the bombardier on **COLIN KELLY**'s crew operating out of Clark Field at the beginning of the war with Japan. Many of you know that COLIN and his crew were given credit for sinking the Japanese battleship Haruna. [More on that at the end of the articles.] This was the first real victory of the US forces in the war. COLIN was KIA and was awarded the Medal of Honor by Pres. Roosevelt. He also requested that COLIN's son be appointed to West Point when he reached the age for entering that military academy.

The 19<sup>th</sup> evacuated from the Philippines to the island of Java. Most of the ground crews were left behind and became part of the infamous Bataan Death March. One of MEYER's friends was **AL YOUNG**,

an armament person, who survived the death march and was a POW in a Japanese coal mine for the duration of the war. JOHN says that he met AL as an inspector in a special weapons plant JOHN supervised in New Mexico from 1955-60.

The 19<sup>th</sup> moved from Java to Australia with few planes and crewmen. Most of the planes they had were B-17s with no tail guns. The 93<sup>rd</sup> Sqd. went to Longreach while the 28<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> Sqds. went to Cloncurry and Townsville in April - May 1942.

JOHN writes that just 5 days after Pearl Harbor he graduated from flight school on Dec. 12, 1941. On Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> he joined the 9<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Sqd. at West Palm Beach, Fla. They departed from there on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> for places unknown but arrived in Melbourne, Australia, on Jan. 30, 1942. They were then moved to the RAAF Base Williamstown in New South Wales on Feb. 20, 1942. They had no airplanes. They flew the Australian version of the AT-6. Four P-40s arrived in crates about 2 weeks later. Their crew chief, a WW I veteran who was about to retire, and a very young ground crew assembled the planes.

With the exception of a couple of pilots, the rest had never flown a "hot airplane," but the only way to fly them was solo. About March 15<sup>th</sup> the 4 planes took off for Darwin leaving the rest of the pilots, who had about 4 hours of flight time each in the P-40s, behind to find their way to Brisbane where they were assigned to the 8<sup>th</sup> Pursuit Group which had a handful of P-39s. They flew in the P-39s for about 10 hours each when they proceeded to Port Moresby, Papua, New Guinea. Again all but a couple of "old hands" had never fired the guns and the cannon in the nose of a P-39. This proved to be a disaster as several of the planes crashed. JOHN arrived safely, but about 15 minutes after landing their first mission came up. JOHN says that fortunately for him **BUZZY WAGENNOR**, an ace from the Philippine action earlier in the war, took his place.

From Port Moresby, John flew patrol missions and then participated in the Battle of the Coral Sea where he says they were sure happy to see the navy show up. Several days later about 5 of the pilots were put on a flying boat and headed for Townsville. The following day, May 15<sup>th</sup>, they were flown by **FRANK KURTZ** in the B-17 *SWOOSE* to Longreach and Cloncurry to join the 19<sup>th</sup> BG.

They lived in town while assigned to the airfield. It was here that JOHN first met Sgt. **MEYER LEVIN**. Most of the pilots were very experienced in flying B-17s as they had flown them at March Field and at Albuquerque before flying them to the Philippines via Hawaii in the summer of 1941.

JOHN took his first flight in a B-17 with Capt. **FELIX HARELSON** the squadron commander. In all, JOHN had logged only about 40 hours since graduating from flight school. Shortly after, they were briefed for a flight to Townsville and then Port Moresby to refuel before proceeding to Rabaul. **FELIX** told JOHN to sit in the left seat and fly the plane, but JOHN declined the offer.

The outfit moved to Mareeba about September where JOHN joined the crew of 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. **MORRIS "MOE" FREEDMAN**. Their bombardier was **MEYER LEVIN** from Brooklyn, NY. Later in Sept. 1942 they received orders to go to Charleville, Queens, Australia, to pick up a new B-17. It turned out to be *CHIEF SEATTLE* a plane donated to the USAAF by the citizens of Seattle, WA.

MOE had thought that it was unusual that the crew had been ordered to take all of the baggage along with them to Charleville since rumor had it that the 19<sup>th</sup> was to be returned to the States. They spent a couple of days checking out the new B-17 when MOE received a message to proceed to Fenton, a place south of Darwin, Australia. They thought this was strange as they had their full combat crew with them. They flew to a place in the middle of the dessert, but upon landing they were informed that Fenton was still 20 miles farther south.

When they landed at Fenton in that brand new B-17 *SEATTLE CHIEF*, the 64<sup>th</sup> CO, Capt. **NELSON**, the adjutant and all of the troops met them and cheered as they brought in the aircraft awarded to them by the citizens of Seattle. JOHN says MOE was distraught by all this, but Maj. **BLEASEDATE** came up to JOHN with the orders promoting him to a 1<sup>st</sup> Lt..

After a couple of days in Fenton, the crew was ordered to go to Townsville and then on to Port Moresby. After a night in Port Moresby they took off the next morning for the first mission by the 64<sup>th</sup> Sq. It was a recco to Kavieng, New Ireland, in the Bismarck Archipelago. MOE was the Pilot, John the Copilot,

**WEXLER** the Navigator and **MEYER LEVIN** the Bombardier. **LARRY HICKEY** has a picture of the crew given to him by **JOHN** at Norfolk.

The next day the crew again went on a mission, but they lost an engine when over the Owen Stanley Range and turned back to Port Moresby. The following day a 403<sup>rd</sup> crew took *CHIEF SEATTLE* on a similar mission only never to be heard from again.

**MOE** and crew returned to Mareeba where the 19<sup>th</sup> BG was being shipped back to the States. **MOE** went home, but **MEYER** chose to stay on and continue to fight the Japanese. About then, B-17s began arriving from Midway and they were assigned to the 63<sup>rd</sup>, 64<sup>th</sup> and 65<sup>th</sup> Sqds. **RAY HOLSEY**, **CHICK OLSON**, **VERNON REEVES** and others began arriving in the 64<sup>th</sup>. **JOHN** and **MEYER** were assigned to **CHICK OLSON**'s crew. They flew together on several missions throughout the remainder of the year.

In May 1943, **CHICK OLSEN**, **RAY HOLSEY** and **JOHN** along with several others returned to the States. Once again **MEYER** chose to stay and continue fighting the enemy. **JOHN** says that **MEYER LEVIN** was KIA in July or August 1943.

**JOHN PICKERING** also sent the editor better information regarding dates in the information from **ROY E. BAKER**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Waist Gunner from Apple Valley, CA, as reported on page 16 of the Jan. 1999 edition of this Newsletter. **JOHN** says **ROY** joined the 19<sup>th</sup> BG in Oct. '42, and the 19<sup>th</sup> BG returned to the States in Nov. '42.

[The next article will continue this saga as told by **JOHN Y. BARBEE**, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Winters, CA.]

**JOHN Y. BARBEE** phoned the editor and followed this call up with a letter. He too tried to use the incorrect e-mail address. He reported that Sgt. **MEYER LEVIN**, called **MIKE**, joined the crew of **GUYTON CHRISTOPHER** as Bombardier when **OLSON**, **HOLSEY** and **PICKERING** returned to the States. **JOHN B.** was Copilot on that crew. On January 1943 the plane flew into the ocean about 30 miles from Port Moresby. Only 3 members of the crew survived. **MIKE** was not among the survivors.

Here is **JOHN**'s story along with a report of the crash from the Los Angeles "DAILY NEWS" dated Feb. 24 [1943].

On Jan. 7, 1943, **MEYER** voluntarily joined **GUYTON CHRISTOPHER** and crew for a mission on which they needed a good spotter and identifier of enemy ships. **MIKE** was good at this. They sighted a Japanese naval convoy. "From the bombardier's station in the nose **LEVIN** made a detailed report of the convoy's composition. We didn't attack, but shadowed the convoy for a long time and then turned back to base. But we met deteriorating weather and the gasoline gauges sank." When it became evident that they would have to ditch, **JOHN** called **LEVIN** from the nose and told the crew to get into their parachutes.

The plane ran into heavy weather and they were flying just above the waves when the red lights came on signaling that the plane was down to the last 10 minutes of fuel. **JOHN** does not recall how he got out of the plane, but he does remember scrambling aboard the life raft and marveling that it was afloat. He helped Sgt. **JACK MATISOFF**, Los Angeles, and Corp. **SIDNEY SCHWIMMER** into the raft.

**JOHN** says that he has a hazy recollection of **MEYER** "...standing grasping the safety catches of the life raft inside the Fortress. He probably released the raft, which saved our lives, before he was knocked unconscious." They spent 13 hours in the water before being picked up by a Royal Australian flying boat.

He goes on to write that he believes **MEYER** was awarded the Silver Star and the Purple Heart posthumously. He says that he has talked with **JANICE OLSON** who had been in contact with the families of **SCHWIMMER** and **MATISOFF** who he believes have since passed away. He sent along a photo of **MEYER** by his tent in New Guinea. He is going to try to send a copy to Jennifer Draper.

**JOHN** says that over the past 56 years he has been reluctant to talk about this incident, but he feels that if he is being helpful to someone who is family or has other close ties to **MIKE**, he will be helpful.

Another responding to the request for information on **MEYER LEVIN** was **GEORGE F. SICKINGER** cited 3 paragraphs above. He sent the editor e-mail saying that he was sure that I had Jennifer's e-mail address incorrect. **GEORGE** says that he flew one or two missions with **MEYER** who had been the Bom-

bardier on Colin Kelly's crew. GEORGE wondered why MEYER had not returned to the States with the rest of the 19<sup>th</sup> BG.

GEORGE asks that we correct his telephone number to show 910-673-0900.

Yet another letter arrived about MEYER LEVIN from RICHARD PATTON, 64<sup>th</sup> Gunner from Denver, CO. RICHARD says that since he does not have e-mail capabilities he was sending the editor a letter.

RICHARD gives MEYER's serial number as 6975479. He writes that MEYER was a M/Sgt. Bombardier stationed in Hawaii when the Japanese attacked on Dec. 7, 1941. [Actually his squadron had moved to the Philippines about 3 months before the attack on Pearl Harbor.] He was the bombardier on COLIN KELLY's crew. COLIN was the first American officer in WW II to receive the Medal of Honor (posthumously) after crashing his B-17 into a Jap warship. He says that if memory serves him correctly, MEYER bailed out and was rescued. He first met MEYER in Sept. or Oct. of 1942 when they were in the 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

He writes that "... LEVIN was killed on Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, 1943 in a crash of B-17 #381 piloted by 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. GUYTON M. CHRISTOPHER 0-789369. As I recall they were returning from a mission and the plane was severely damaged. They tried to make it back to Jackson Strip at Port Moresby but crashed into Papua Bay. Two or three of the crew survived and were picked up."

RICHARD says that he enjoyed reading GEORGE CARTER's (Headquarters of Cream Ridge, NJ) diary of the Queen Mary voyage as he too was on that trip. "It brought back memories I had long forgotten." He also sends thanks to those who put out "... such a great newsletter."

[The editor's wife, who of course did not make that trip, says she really enjoyed reading that diary. She wants to know why we can't have more articles running in a series like that one did?]

In the article by Harold Guard in the Los Angeles paper mentioned above, there is one other story told about MEYER by M/Sgt. Bombardier JOHN HANSEN, Goshen, NY. "I first met LEVIN in Hawaii in 1940 when we served in the same squadron. We went to the Philippines in Sept. 1941. After escaping from the Philippines to Australia we took part in the Coral Sea battle. LEVIN's plane was damaged in that fight and the crew had to bail out over Australia. LEVIN landed alone on top of a big ant hill. He was knocked out and lay there two hours. When he recovered he made his way to a farmhouse. The farmer thought he was a parachute trooper and threatened to hand him over to the police."

In the book *AMERICA IN THE AIR WAR* by Edward Jablonski and The Editors of Time-Life Books 1982, the story of Colin Kelley and Meyer Levin are told with the advantage of hindsight.

After a disastrous attack by Japanese planes on Clark Field, Gen. Brereton sent his "... paltry forces to the attack on December 10, after a day of poor flying weather that had grounded most planes. The feats of some of his pilots provided the bewildered Americans back home with their first, and much needed, heroes. The most highly publicized was Captain Colin Kelly, who set off from Clark Field, his B-17 armed with three 600-pound bombs. His orders were to search for a Japanese carrier reported off the northern tip of Luzon. Kelly and his crew did not find it, but they did spot a large ship about five miles off the coast lobbing shells onto the beaches where the Japanese were planning to come ashore. A half dozen smaller warships were moving toward the projected landing areas.

Kelly veered to the north and then, with bombardier Meyer Levin at his station in the plane's nose, turned back to make a run on the large vessel, which he was certain was a battleship. The crew watched the three bombs curve down toward the target. The first splashed into the sea about 50 yards short and the second also exploded in the water but close to the ship's side. The third, however, may have detonated on the ship's after turret. There was a brilliant flash and a sudden gush of smoke from the stern. Soon the Japanese warship was engulfed in smoke, making it impossible to determine the full extent of the damage.

Just then Kelly and his men encountered Japanese fighters, which swept up from under the Fortress. The B-17's gunners drove them off and Kelly headed into a cloud formation. The Zeros seemed to have been left behind until the navigator, Lt. Joe M. Bean, decided to check the plane's

altitude. As he bent down from the astrodome that had been his observation post, a burst of gunfire blew the dome off. The same burst beheaded the left waist gunner, wounded another crew member and shattered the cockpit instrument panel. The Japanese fighters, which had stalked the B-17 through the clouds, then set the left wing afire. A third attack severed the control cables, and Kelly, fighting the diving plane, ordered a bailout. Bean was one of the last to leave. He saw co-pilot Lt. Donald d. Robins was donning his parachute and assumed that Kelly was about to follow.

Bean had barely cleared the plane and opened his chute when the air was rent by a tremendous explosion. It blew Robins clear of the bomber; he succeeded in getting his chute open. Kelly, however, had not made it out of the plane before it exploded. He had lingered trying to maintain control so that the rest of the crew could jump. His sacrifice, and the survivors' claim that they had hit the battleship *Haruna*, made headlines in the United States. *The New York Times* proclaimed that the "sinking of the Japanese battleship was the major event in the war thus far." Colin Kelly's heroism was also encouraging to the American public. (Bombardier Levin had not in fact hit the *Haruna*, which was nowhere near the Philippines on December 10. The identity of the ship his bombs may have struck was never revealed by the Japanese.)

Also trying to reach Jennifer with the bad e-mail address was **ARTHUR TASSONI**, 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron from Toms River, NJ. He contacted SAM by e-mail who made the correction for ART.

Along with his dues for 1999 and a small donation, **PATRICK FREEMAN**, 65<sup>th</sup> from Eagle River, WI, reports that he had a long phone conversation with Dr. "DOC" **MILTON GUSACK**, 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Surgeon from Chevy Chase, MD. He says that it was great talking with DOC.

In a wry remark PAT says his "...only comment concerning 'The BOOK' - Larry Hickey and the Commander-In-Chief both believe it's not what you do or don't do but what you say you did or didn't do." He sends his Best Wishes to all.

Keep those pens out, as here is another change of address from **PHIL W. WELCH**, Headquarters and Charter Member of the Association. 2366 E. Becker Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85028. Phone 602-971-9216.

**JOHN "JACK" J. FAHEY, Jr.**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Singer Island, FL, remitted his '99 dues and a Thank You to All for the good work being done for the Association.

It is always so sad to have to report the passing of another of our members. **THEODORE G. "TEDDY" De FEDERICIS**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot and retired Chief of Police of Cheektowaga, NY, died on February 6, 1999. After his retirement, TED served three terms as Town Justice in Arkwright, NY, where he lived as a "gentleman farmer" with his wife **LORI**. God Bless.

The web site created and maintained by **E. TRACY TUCCIARONE**, Associate member from Indianapolis, IN, is attracting a great deal of attention from many of our members and many persons whose fathers or grandfathers served in the 43<sup>rd</sup> during WW II. If you have the capabilities to use the Internet or have someone who can log on for you, you should visit her site. <http://members.aol.com/kens43rd/>

Several of those signing the Guest Book on the site leave messages inquiring about a father, grandfather or a veteran from the 43<sup>rd</sup> who has departed this earth.

In addition, the web site with the URL <<http://www.mach3www.com/B24>> also has an inquiry every few days about someone who served in the 43<sup>rd</sup> but who has since passed away or was KIA. It is impossible for the editor to monitor all of these requests for information and still manage to produce a newsletter quarterly. He has written to many of these persons, but he has probably not written to an equal or greater number. Listed below will be a brief summary of some of these requests. If you have any knowledge of the person(s) about whom the inquiries have been made, it would be nice if you would contact

that person(s) and provide what information you have. All of the material on MEYER LEVIN in this issue of the Newsletter is a direct outgrowth of just such an inquiry. If there is only an e-mail address, and you do not have access to e-mail, then send your information to the editor. He will attempt to relay this information on to the interested parties via e-mail.

Carol Van Keuren Gibson recently came upon a picture of *SATAN'S SISTER* and crew dated 10 Oct. 1943. Her deceased father, **PHILIP VAN KEUREN**, was navigator on this crew. Names shown are: Lt. **ELMER M. RICE** (Paris, TX); Capt. **JOHN E. BOND** (Scarsdale, NY); Lt. **JAMES W. SMITH** (Hayes Store, VA); T/Sgt. **J. A. GOSSEAU** (Grendstone, PA) and S/Sgt. **JOHN SHOFFER** (Mannsville, NY). These men were listed as in the 403<sup>rd</sup> Sqd. The editor e-mailed Carol and gave her the address of **JOE GOSSEAU**, 403<sup>rd</sup> from Warren, MI. He has not heard anything from Carol again.

Joe Falce has inquired about his father, **NICHOLAS ANTHONY WALSH**, a radio operator in the 5<sup>th</sup> AAF. No claim is made that he was in the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG. <joe.falce@nashville.com>.

Alfred O'Brien <alfred.obiren@gte.net> has inquired about a brother who was copilot on a B-24 42-41049 called *WHO'S NEXT*. It crashed on 12/7/44 in Mt. Malishimbo on Mindoro, Philippines.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> BG will hold its annual reunion in San Antonio, TX from Sept. 8th through 12<sup>th</sup>. For more information contact Charles Baker at <cbaker@best.com>.

Our Vice President, **MAX M. AXELSEN**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from An Antonio, TX, sent along an article with a black and white photo of the static B-24 44-51228 being removed from the parade ground at Lackland AFB in San Antonio. It is being removed and sent to Duxford, England, in exchange for a Spitfire. They have the facilities for a complete restoration of the B-24, a rare plane today despite the record numbers in which it was produced. The restoration process will take at least two years. Ford Motor Company has donated a half million dollars towards the restoration.

The article mentions that the B-24 flew in record numbers from British bases in WW II. It cites that "the Mighty Eighth" was the largest air-striking force ever committed to battle. Liberators flew alongside B-17 Flying Fortresses in massive formations. Mention is made that the B-24 served well in the Pacific Theater because of the aircraft's great range.

[There has been a great deal of controversy, particularly on the military aviation news groups about giving a rare and precious B-24 to the British when so few exist in the USA today.]

This particular Liberator is believed to be the last one to serve in active duty in the U. S. Air Force. It was redesignated as an EZB-24M and was used for ice research flying. It has been on display at Lackland AFB since 1956 and needs restoration badly.

MAX also enclosed a fine color Polaroid picture of the plane as it rests at Lackland AFB.

As MAX writes, "I find it strange that there are so few 24's left after so many being built. I guess it may have been because it was always in the shadow of the B-17 and the mighty 8<sup>th</sup> AF."

Max says that he and **MARGARET** been recovering slowly from upper respiratory problems. He says that there is a great deal of flu in the area, and that they need rain to wash the mold, etc., from the air.

MAX mailed his lifetime dues to **BILL**. He writes that his doctor says MAX should be around a few more years, but MAX says, "But what do Dr.'s know?"

In mid February a phone call from **FRED HAGEN**, Associate member from Philadelphia, PA, revealed that he is planning on another trip to New Guinea starting about March 1<sup>st</sup>. He is working with David Talichek, California owner of several restored WW II aircraft, to obtain the rights to remove the 19<sup>th</sup> BG B-17 *SWAMP GHOST* sitting in the Agaraimbo Swamp in near pristine condition. The pilot of the plane when it crashed was **FRED EATON**. **FRED E.** has since passed on, but he was interviewed by a Ken Fields before his death. Although the plans are tentative and subject to change, it is hoped that they

will obtain the needed rights and will move the plane to Australia for a complete restoration to its combat status. The estimate it that it will take about two years to complete the restoration and get the plane certified to fly. Then they hope to be able to fly it back to the States on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its crash. FRED HAGEN has obtained the rights to the videos and films of the expedition, restoration and interviews with the still surviving members of the crew. [See the Oct. 1998 Newsletter.]

The editor and his wife, ANITA, had a very nice letter from EILEEN GOODWIN, widow of the late ROBERT "BOB" GOODWIN, 64<sup>th</sup> Bombsight Maintenance from Kewanee, IL. She is doing well since the passing of BOB. She reports that they had about 24.7" of snow in January which is well above their average snowfall of 10", but they just "hunkered" in until they were dug out and had no problems at all. Hey EILEEN, we had 50+" in the first 2 weeks of January in Kenmore, NY, where the editor lives. The rest of January produced a mere 10" more of snow.

A very interesting and informative letter filled with two mission reports and several beautiful winter scene photos of their residence and "private golf course" arrived from ANN and DAYTON BLANCHARD, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Cloudcroft, NM.

DAYT reports that he has submitted three "War Stories" to the National Dadalian Foundation. He is a member of this organization, which consists of active duty or retired pilots. If his articles are accepted, they will appear in the book *The Legacy of Daedalus, War Stories and Flying Tales*. The stories are about an in-flight "almost out of fuel" incident on a mission to Wenchow, China, on June 9, 1945 and a ground encounter with a Japanese sniper while at Clark Field.

Included with his letter were copies of notes he had for two missions from Ie Shima. He has the numbers of the 65<sup>th</sup> planes on the missions as well as the last names of most of the pilots.

The first of these missions was on 7 August 1945 to Kumamoto, Japan. This is on Kyushu Island directly east of Nagasaki. His notes show Capt. LELAND H. AGARD, Starkville, MS, in the lead plane #827. On his right wing is #540 piloted by KENNETH M. HILLAS Morristown, NJ, and on his left wing is #362 piloted by W. R. "BOB" GAFFNEY, now of Madison, IN. Leading the second element in #341 is DAYT BLANCHARD, now of Cloudcroft, NM. On his right wing is #806 piloted by MAC C., unidentified, and on the left wing is #024 piloted by "BIRD DOG" also unidentified. In the second slot flying alone is #466 piloted by HANK also unidentified. [The editor was on this mission flying #466 according to his notes as well as the official squadron log of his mission, but he has never before been called Hank. His notes also indicate a different arrangement of the planes, but never mind that. Both of these references also name the target as Tsuiki Air Drome, but this could be near Kumamoto. The editor believes, but is not certain, that the MAC C. was JOUBERT S. McCREA, Jr., Jacksonville, FL.]

DAYT notes that the altitudes for the bomb runs were 11,500' for the 65<sup>th</sup>, 12,000' for the 403<sup>rd</sup> and 11,000' for the 64<sup>th</sup>. We all rendezvoused over Erabu Island at 10,000' where the 3 squadrons met yellow and green P-51s fighter escorts. The bomb runs were to be between 1040 and 1050 hours which was critical as shortly after 1050 hours the target was to be hit by A-20s code named Blueboy. The runs were to come from the north heading at 180 degrees. Once the bombs were away, the 3 squadrons were to make a 90-degree right angle turn away from the target. There were supposed to be 12 antiaircraft batteries around the target.

An elaborate rescue arrangement was set for the mission. One submarine (Clammy Hand), PBYS, 2 B-25s (Rummy Blue) and one PT boat (Sapphire) made up the rescue team. DAYT's notes include a particular warning from Intelligence to stay away from KYOTO, HIROSHIMA and NIICATA. Dayt feels that these 3 cities may already have been selected as possible targets for the ATOMIC BOMB.

[The editor's notes indicate that the bomb loads carried were 40x120 20# frags. Don't ask him to explain this today. DAYT probably remembers this better than does the editor.]

The other mission to which DAYT refers is one made on August 12, 1945 to Matsuyama, Shikoku Island, Japan. Capt. GLEN E. BALES, now of Springfield, TN, was the lead pilot in #812. On his right

wing was **"BIRD DOG"** in #846 while in #362 was **AARON C. BURLESON**, Lawton, OK. The second element was led by **JAMES A. OTTINGER**, Bethlehem, PA in # 341. On his right wing in #806 was **DAYT BLANCHARD** while on his left wing in #024 was **BEVERLY G. ALLISON**, Ida. LA. Making up the 7<sup>th</sup> plane from the 65<sup>th</sup> in #466 was **KENNETH M. HILLAS** flying in the second slot position.

DAYT believes that this was probably the 43<sup>rd</sup>'s last mission of the war. The crews encountered a barrage of phosphorous flak as they approached from 170 degrees at 11,000'. After dropping their bombs, they made a right break to the sea. The 43<sup>rd</sup>'s call sign was **MUSTARD**. **MUSTARD 1** was the 403<sup>rd</sup>'s, **MUSTARD 2** was the 64<sup>th</sup>'s and **MUSTARD 3** was the 65<sup>th</sup>'s. The fighter escort was 16 P-51s with call sign **BISON**. The group was over the target at 1000 hours and hit the primary really well.

In a later mailing **DAYT BLANCHARD** sent a poem entitled **"THE REUNION"** which appeared in the **"Daedalian Flyer"** of the National Fraternity of Pilots. It is worth citing here. DAYT especially finds the last for line to be "especially poignant."

#### THE REUNION

Autumn laves, rustling together to the appointed  
place, the old warriors come.  
Pilgrims, drifting across the land they fought to preserve.  
Where they meet is not so important anymore. ... They meet  
and that's enough for now.  
Greetings echo across a lobby.  
Hands reach out and arms draw buddies close. Embraces, that  
as young men they were too uncomfortable to give, too shy to  
accept so lovingly.  
But deep, within these Indian Summer days they have reached  
a greater understanding of life and love.  
The shells holding their souls are weaker now,  
but hearts and minds grow vigorous remembering.  
On a table someone spreads old photographs; a test of recollection.  
And friendly laughter echoes at shocks of hair gone gray or white, or merely gone.  
The rugged, slender bodies lost forever.  
Yet they no longer need to prove their strength.  
Some are now sustained by one of "medicines miracles,"  
And even in this fact they manage to find humor.  
The women, all those who waited, all those who love them, have watched the changes  
take place. Now, they observe and listen, and  
smile at each other; as glad to be together as the men.  
Talk turns to war and planes and foreign lands. Stories are told again,  
reweaving the threadbare fabric of the past.  
Mending one more time the banner of their youth.  
They hear the vibrations, feel the shudder of metal as propellers whine and whirl, and  
planes come to life.  
These birds with fractured wings can see beyond the mist of clouds, and they are in the  
air again, chasing the wind,  
Feeling the exhilaration of flight, close to the heavens;  
the wild and blue yonder of their anthem.  
Dead comrades, hearing their names spoken, wanting to share in this time, if only in spirit,  
move silently among them. Their presence is felt and smiles appear beneath misty eyes.  
Each, in his own way, may wonder who will be absent another year.

The room grows quiet for a time.  
Suddenly an ember flames to life. Another memory burns.  
The talk may turn to other wars and other men, and of futility. So, this is how it goes.  
The past is so much the present.  
In their ceremonies, the allegiances, the speeches, and the prayers, one cannot help but  
hear the deep eternal love of country they will forever share.  
Finally, it is time to leave. Much too soon to set aside this little piece of yesterday, but the  
past cannot be held too long for it is fragile. The say, "Farewell ... See you next year, God  
willing," breathing silent prayers for one another.  
Each keeping a little of the other with him forever.

Rachel Firth

A phone call from **LON H. WEYLAND**, 64<sup>th</sup> Airplane Maintenance from Hot Spring, AR, indicated that he wanted to order the book *SKIP BOMBING* by our own Past President, **JAMES T. MURPHY**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot, and was not sure how to do this. Order your book directly from **JIM** at 4003 Nunn Road S.E., Huntsville, AL 35802. The cost to active members is \$15.00 plus \$3.50 for S&H. The cost to non-members is \$18.50 plus \$3.50 for S&H. So send him a check for the right amount. He will autograph your book.

Get out your pens if you have put them away. LON's phone is now 501-623-8655. In later mail LON sent in his 1999 dues.

**JIM** and **MICKEY MURPHY** headed to Australia and Singapore on March 6<sup>th</sup>. They expect to return on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. A post card the editor and his wife received from Melbourne from **HELEN** and **SAM COMMONS** says they will meet **MICKEY** and **JIM** for dinner one evening. The postmark dates are so faint; it is impossible to tell the date.

Sad news from **JOSEPH C. DiMAURO**, 64<sup>th</sup> Nose Gunner from Cherry Hill, NJ, and a member of **SHAD SHADDOX**'s crew, to the effect that his good wife **FLORENCE "FLOSS"** passed away on Jan. 14, 1999. God Bless.

Along with his '99 dues **RAY "MATTIE" MATTESEN**, 64<sup>th</sup> Ground Crewman from Stafford Springs, CT, sent a short note saying he is proud that he could go from Bangor, ME, to Owi and back again. He wishes good health and the best of luck to all.

E-mail from **JIM RODELLA**, 64<sup>th</sup> Gunner from Pittsburgh, PA, reports that Jim called the Collings Foundation and gave them the correct tail colors of *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. He also informed them that he flew his 42<sup>nd</sup> and last mission in that plane - #973. He says that his daughter **JOYCE**, Associate member from Pittsburgh, gave him the 50<sup>th</sup> commemorative plate of *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL* from the Hamilton Collection of Great Planes of WW II. It has the incorrect rudder stripe colors.

**JIM** also says that for those who are interested and served in the 43<sup>rd</sup> from circa Oct. 1944 through June 1945, can obtain their Philippine Liberation Medal from the Philippine government, if they do not already have this, by sending proof of entitlement: separation papers or form DD214. Mail to:

The Special Presidential Representative  
Office of Veteran Affairs  
Embassy of the Philippines  
1617 Massachusetts Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20036.

On Oct. 23, 1998 **JIM** and his wife, **BOOTS**, were given a surprise 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary party by their children, Judi, Joyce and Jim. They shared happy memories with family and old friends.

If you are interested in ordering a copy of the Springfield reunion photo album, you may still do so. The cost is \$20.00 per book including mailing. Send to **Dunning Company Inc. Reunion Services PO Box 759, Theodore, AL 36590-0759**. Refer to job **98321 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group, Springfield, Massachusetts**.

Along with his dues **DOUGLAS A. PATTERSON**, Associate member from Columbia, MD, and son of the late **GEORGE PATTERSON** of Headquarters Sqd., explained that his mother, **PHYLLIS PATTERSON**, widow of **GEORGE** had passed away last year from an inoperable brain tumor. God Bless.

**DOUGLAS** says that his dad served on the crew of **ANGUS B. TAFF**, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Tallahassee, FL. He e-mailed Angus's wife, **HAZEL**, after reading in the Jan. Newsletter that Angus was suffering from Alzheimer's. He wanted them to know the high regard his parents had for **ANGUS**.

Dues for 1999-2001 were received from **JACK NUNNELLEE**, 64<sup>th</sup> Gunner from Salem, OR, who writes that he thinks that he may have flown in *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. He checked with **RUSS BURNETT**, 64<sup>th</sup> Flight Engineer from Conway, MA, who was on the same crew. **RUSS** was not certain but said he would get in touch with **HOOTEN**, their pilot, to see if he could recall whether or not the crew had flown in that particular plane.

**JACK** said that he had a call from **LLOYD ANDERSON**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Corvallis, OR, and winner of the bridge tournament in Springfield. **JACK** says that he promised to visit **LLOYD** in the near future.

Associate member, **JAMES J. IVERSON** of Villa Park, IL, has sent in dues for lifetime membership. **JAMES** wants to become a life member in memory of his late uncle **JAMES J. FRANKLIN**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot KIA on May 18, 1945 on a mission to T'ainan, Formosa.

**JAMES** wants to thank all of those who sent him remembrances and stores of his uncle and crew. When he sees his uncle's name in the Newsletter, **JIM** knows that his uncle has not been forgotten. He hopes to be able to get away from his job so that he can be at the Tucson reunion.

It is most unfortunate to have to write this, but at the time this Newsletter was prepared for printing, there was absolutely no word from **LARRY HICKEY** about the status of the history of the 43<sup>rd</sup>.

A very nice letter arrived from **PATRICIA RUCKERT** of Weems, VA, and widow of the late **JOHN "JACK" RUCKERT** a Flight Engineer in the 63<sup>rd</sup>. **PATRICIA** writes that **JACK** died in July 1996, and though she appreciates the sending of the Newsletter to her, she no longer recognizes any of the people written about. So she has asked to be taken off the mailing list. We are always sorry to hear this, but we will respect your request, **PATRICIA**. The association is always here for you if you should ever need us.

A few Newsletters back **SHIRLEY M. VORSE**, widow of **BOYD VORSE**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Engineer, had written to **SAM** to say that although she had lived in Pennsylvania all of her life, she never heard of Flourtown and could not find it on the map. She sends **SAM** her apology as she found the town in an old atlas, so she now knows that he lives on this planet.

She has been working on family histories and hopes that when she completes these, her family can store them in their computers.

**SHIRLEY** says that she thinks of the 43<sup>rd</sup> as one big family and she is thankful "...for all of you good fellows who do put so much time and effort in this history." She hopes that **LARRY Hickey's** conscience will get him moving and finish that book soon.

She wants to mention that one of our members from Phoenix, AZ, did have a photo of the airplane that **JULIAN STEWART** was looking for. She writes may God bless you all.



-R Standing - King, Straw, Wisnack  
 -R Seated - Zeller, Mooney, Gallagher,  
 Thomason, Sprott, Mercer, Cooley

In a letter accompanying his 1999 dues, **CHARLES "CHUCK" THOMASON**, 64<sup>th</sup> Tail Gunner from Craigmont, ID, writes that in the January 1999 Newsletter he read about **DEBBIE NELSON ADAIR**, niece of **CHARLES WAYNE STRAW**, Copilot in the 64<sup>th</sup>, wanting to know where to dispose of many items STRAW had saved since his time in the 43<sup>rd</sup>.

**CHUCK** says that STRAW was the Copilot on the crew of Lt. **THOMAS SPROTT**, and that he, "CHUCK", was a gunner on the crew. They were on a raid of Balikpapan, which originated from Owi Island for the 43<sup>rd</sup>. It was a 16 hour 50 minute mission on Oct. 11, 1944. They flew ship #363. **CHUCK** was credited with shooting down an enemy plane.

**CHUCK** enclosed a copy of a black & white photo of the entire crew (at left) as it was being interviewed after the mission. The crew consisted of **KING, STRAW, WISNACK, ZELLER, MOONEY, GALLAGHER, THOMASON,**

**SPROTT, MERCER and COOLEY.**

He sends his congratulations to **JOSEPH R. WISNACK**, Gunner from Stuart, FL, for becoming a life member in the Association.

He also sends kudos to the Treasurer and his Elf for the newsletters.

**RENE HERRE**, Sacramento, CA, and widow of the late **WILLIAM F. HERRE**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot, wrote to Sam that **WILLIAM**, who died in March 1998, always looked forward to the upcoming reunions. They had visited Tucson many times as he had a brother living there. She notes that their dues are paid through 1999, but she would have paid them had they not been current.

In a letter along with his '98 & '99 dues comes word from **LARRY D. HOLMES**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Flight Engineer from Milton, FL, that he suffered a stroke on Thanksgiving Day. He reports that he is trying to keep "Col." **GEORGE WHITE**, Ball Turret Gunner, in line but it is not easy to do so. **LARRY** also reports a change in his house number from 635 Grant Street to **4324 Grant Street**. Hang in there **LARRY** and may you have a complete recovery.

**ROBERT D. VALLANCE**, 65<sup>th</sup> Navigator from Medford, OR, wrote to request information about someone who could provide the 13<sup>th</sup> AAF 307<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group with interesting historical data about the air war over New Guinea. This would be presented at the annual reunion in San Antonio in October 2000 as well as in their quarterly newsletter. He had thought of **JANICE OLSON**, Associate from Apple Valley, CA, but when he phoned her, he was told that her phone had been disconnected. Since we do not have any file of possible speakers or others to present such data, the secretary referred him to **ALFRED HAGEN**, Associate from Philadelphia, PA, who has made to presentations of his trips to New Guinea at our last two reunion. If anyone has any suggestions, please contact BOB at his address in the Roster.

Many of us have passed through the Tonopah AAF Base in our training in B-24s before joining the 43<sup>rd</sup>. If you are one of those persons, you might be interested to learn that Allen and Valerie Metscher and their families have established a foundation which is compiling the history of that base. The editor

has been on contact with them for over a year now by e-mail and snail mail. They recently created a web site - <[www.rockhounds.com/rockgem/articles/tonopah\\_goldfield.html](http://www.rockhounds.com/rockgem/articles/tonopah_goldfield.html)> - that you may find of interest. Any information including pictures, etc., which you have dealing with Tonopah and are willing to share with them, they are eager to have. They will pay for expenses in making reproductions, etc. Unless it is something you do not want, they ask you **not to send them original materials**. The land address is **P.O. Box 392, TAAF Research, Goldfield, NV 89013-0392**.

In early March, **BILL WILSON** passed on to the editor a bundle of mail that he had received. There were about 30 or so in all. So the next several articles are from that correspondence.

**PETE J. ROBERTS**, Associate member and gunner from Merriwa, Western Australia, noticed in the 68<sup>th</sup> Edition of this Newsletter, Oct. 1998, the article from **CLIFFORD L. MILLER, Jr.**, 65<sup>th</sup> Navigator from Claverack, NY. It related how **CLIFF** and the crew on which he served as bombardier and navigator on the mission, dropped supplies to an Aussie group in the Coast Watchers service on New Britain Island. **PETE** says that he is quite familiar with the Coast Watchers service and was attached to **ANGAU** at Dobodura and Lae at the end of the war. He has accumulated a number of books and, and feels that between him and **CLIFF**, they should be able to pin down the actual parties to whom they dropped the supplies. He enclosed several bits of material to pass on to **CLIFFORD**. [This, the editor has done.]

**PETE** says these Coast Watchers were taken to enemy territory by U.S. submarines, P.T. boats or Catalinas and dumped there to carry out their missions. It is an intriguing story that he will write about at some future date.

He thinks that we may get to read about the 22<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group this year. This history by **LARRY HICKEY** is the one to immediately precede the 43<sup>rd</sup>'s. **PETE** remembers the 22<sup>nd</sup> raiding Timor 2 days running in Nov. 1942. One plane was lost in a ditching, but the crew was rescued. They put up a great show of precision formation flying as they returned across Darwin Harbour to land on an **RAAF** strip. The raids were carried out along with the **RAAF** flying Lockheed Hudsons from 13 Squadron.

He wishes the best to all the association.

**CLIFF L. "LUD" MILLER** thanked the editor for the materials mentioned in the preceding article. He is going to try to come up with something of interest to **Pete**.

**LUD** says that he has seen from time to time in the Newsletter a reference to **Doc. MILTON GUSACK**, our eminent 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Surgeon from Chevy Chase, MD. **LUD** would like to relay one more story involving the good doctor. This could well go into our Quarterly Humor section.

While stationed on Owi, **LUD** was bitten by a tick and came down with scrub typhus. **Doc** sent him to the small, mobile hospital on the tiny island that the Navy ran but serviced all military personnel. One day a pilot from the 65<sup>th</sup> stopped and talked with **LUD** who asked the pilot what he was doing there. The response was that he had a problem and was on his way to the next ward.

**LUD** told him quickly that there must be a mistake as the next ward was the Nut Ward. As **LUD** says, he had no knowledge of what was ailing the pilot and had no idea he was having a mental problem.

His friend left the area and returned to the 65<sup>th</sup>'s encampment and sought out the doctor. He approached **Doc GUSACK** and told **Doc** that **MILLER** said that he (the pilot) was being sent to the Nut Ward. **Doc** put his arms around **MILLER's** friend and told him that **MILLER** had the story all wrong. Actually, **MILLER** was in the Nut Ward. **LUD** says that **Doc** was always fast on his feet.

With a touch of bitterness **JOSEPH SHAPURAS**, 65<sup>th</sup> from Largo, FL, writes **BILL** to thank him for his efforts in trying to get **JOSEPH's** 43<sup>rd</sup> material back from **JANICE OLSON**, Associate from Apple Valley, CA. He points out that he has been unable to get his material back and **BILL's** efforts had no better results. **JOE** wonders if he will ever see this again. [The editor wrote to **JANICE** via e-mail and

the package she had sent him had been missent. It was being held by the postal service. She has since recovered it and shipped it to JOSEPH.]

**HAYDEN CLARK**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot, has paid his '98 & '99 dues. He also reports a new address. Another change for your Roster folks. #579 Sagamore Ave., Tide Watch #69, Portsmouth, NH 03801.

More sad news from **DOROTHY L. KOBOSKO** of Warminster, PA. She reports the passing of **HENRY**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron, on Sept. 16, 1998. DOROTHY says that HENRY always talked about all of his friends and his flying, etc.

She said that HENRY had an aneurysm of the brain 20 years ago and had a stroke on his right side. He had not smoked in 20 years but died of inoperable lung cancer. She misses him so much as they had been together for so many, many years. Our prayers are with you. May God Bless.

Mailing in dues for '99 is **YVONNE SHELTON** of San Pedro, CA. She is the widow of the late **FRANK SHELTON** a 65<sup>th</sup> Crew Chief. She doesn't want to miss any Newsletters.

**WAYNE E. CALDWELL**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Radio Instruments from Fishers, IN, writes that one of these years he may get to a reunion. He has not attended one as yet. He has a full schedule of meetings, classes, seminars, camps and conferences as a teacher and minister in The Wesleyan (Methodist) Church. He says that he is called on constantly to minister to large and small groups.

WAYNE figures that life membership in the association is only \$100 which is less than he would pay for 7 consecutive years, so he sent **BILL** his life time membership fee. Let's hope that you get to a reunion before 7 more years pass by. They are great.

Remitting dues for 2000 & 2001, **JOHN COOP** 403<sup>rd</sup> from Kellyville, NSW Australia, writes that he noted with interest the request in the Jan. 1999 Newsletter from Jennifer Draper for information about **MEYER LEVIN**. John goes on to provide a good deal of information about MEYER which in general agrees with what has been printed earlier in this Newsletter. He is quite certain that they were both at Iron Range in Oct. - Nov. 1942 and they met when on the same work detail.

JOHN did not know what type of plane they were flying when **COLIN KELLY** lost his life. He also says that after leaving Iron Range he never heard of MEYER again until he came to live in Australia. Sometime in the 50s he was at an evening movie when between the main features a short came on, narrated by Frank Sinatra, and it was about MEYER. It showed MEYER walking around a B-17 and then hauling himself up through the hatch under the forward section as so many of us did to get into the nose section. JOHN says he couldn't do that today to save his life. The bit went on to say, incorrectly, that MEYER lost his life when shot up in the nose section of a B-17.

John asks that this information be passed on to Jennifer since he does not have e-mail capabilities. [This will be done along with a good deal of other materials.]

JOHN says that he receives greetings at Christmas time from **CLARA MARIE** and **J. C. CHUNKY WILFERT**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Navigator from Crowley, LA. JOHN writes that the WILFERTs get to some interesting places.

**CLAIRE SPENCE** from Virginia Beach, VA, and widow of the late **WILLIAM L. SPENCE**, Headquarters Company, writes to express thanks for publishing the diary of the trip on the Queen Mary by **GEORGE WHITE**. She says that **BILL** enjoyed reading this as it brought back so many memories, but how unfortunate that he did not live to read the last installment.

They had planned to attend the Springfield reunion, but before they had made their reservations, **BILL** fell from his wheelchair and broke his left hip. "It was all downhill from then on and he died the 10<sup>th</sup> of January."

CLAIRE says that BILL wore his 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group cap everywhere, as he was so proud of it. He had 2 copies of *Down Under*. Both contain lots of autographs, and she wonders if sending the names would be of any help to anyone. She would be glad to do this for anyone who wants them. She does have an e-mail address <clairespence@MSN.com>.

It is so sad to write of the passing of another of our comrades. May they all have a reunion in that other world to which we pass. God Bless.

Making his dues current is **CHARLES L. RIEFENBERG** 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Chief from Hillside IL. He also reports a new area code for his phone. His phone number is now 708-544-6366.

**ALBERT TUBBESING**, 63<sup>rd</sup> from Lake Ozark, MO, has paid up his dues through the year 2000. He hopes to see everyone in October.

Also remitting his '99 dues is **PAUL J. BLASEWITZ**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Tail Gunner Armorer from Clearwater, FL. PAUL also reports some changes in his address and area phone code. His zip number has been changed to 33764. His phone area code is 727. He does not have an area code listed in the Roster. Nothing else has changed.

Paul enjoys the Newsletter immensely as "It's kind of like peeking back in time to old memories." He says that he flew as tail gunner with many different pilots. He was flying on the crew of **RALPH De LOACH**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Marina Del Re, CA, when they went down at sea in *BLACK JACK* off the coast of New Guinea near Boga Boga.

This year while he was up north, he went to an air show at Frederick, MD. There a B-17 was the main exhibit. It was called *TEXAS RAIDERS* and was owned by the Confederate Air Force. While there he met Col. Robert Morgan, pilot of the B-17 *MEMPHIS BELLE*. Paul had the colonel autograph Steve Birdsall's book, *Claims to Fame: the B-17 Flying Fortress*, a compilation of some, if not most, of the most famous B-17s of WW II. He found it good to see a B-17 still flying. This one was fully equipped with all of the guns, the ammo and turrets. It was great to see so many tourists showing an interest in the plane and crawling over the plane.

PAUL wrote that he had a phone call from **RALPH De LOACH** who reported that he was to have a knee replacement in February.

Along with his dues for '98 & '99 **JAMES J. SMITH**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Radar Operator from Wichita, KS, enclosed a copy of a mission log prepared by his Navigator for the 43<sup>rd</sup>'s history book. The following is a direct quote of JIM's letter.

This is the most detailed write up of a mission I have ever read even though the mission was not a success. I think any crewmember [sh]ould live through ... a mission again with the details written. It may be too large to put in the newsletter. If it is, I would be glad to send a copy to anyone interested and getting tired of waiting for the book to come out. I was the radar operator on **CLARENCE C. TEX MOLDER**'s crew in the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG, 63<sup>rd</sup> Sqdn. Besides myself I know of only one other, **PAUL J. INDYKE** Bomb., in our crew that is still alive. **JOHN HARMON**, Nav., died in the spring of 1994. His comments were [that] he sent the write up to the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Grp. History book but doubted if it would make the book. He said that you will note the date of the mission was 20 December 1943. On 24 Dec. 43, Christmas Eve, we were sent out again. I always felt they sent us out on Christmas Eve to get even for the trouble we caused.

[Editor's note. The mission log is a 6 1/2 page, single line space, typewritten document. It is well done, but too large to include with this edition. The mission took place on Dec. 19-20, 1943. It originated from APO 503 and was an "Armed Reconnaissance" mission to the Bismarck Sea area north of New Britain for the purpose of looking for shipping close to the shore along the west coast of New Ire-

land. If you are interested, you should contact JIM. His address is 981 Valleyview, Wichita, KS 67212. His e-mail address is <jsmith33@juno.com>.]

Accompanying his dues to our treasurer is a long informative letter from **WILLIAM F. PERKINS Jr.**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Headquarters of Kettering, OH. At the start of the year he was the primary care giver to his uncle until mid February. He flew home then and began to work for a contractor out of Wright Patterson AFB. In the course of his work with a new DOD Logistics data base system, he went to Washington, D.C., a couple of times.

In May his doctor removed some black warts and a mole from **BILL**'s chin. The latter proved to be melanoma, so it was removed. About that time **MICKIE**, his wife, was told that she needed a cornea transplant in her right eye. She is blind in her other eye. Since there was no great rush for the transplant, they went on a planned trip to Kansas that included the wedding on the 18<sup>th</sup> of a grandson, **BRANDON**, oldest son of **BILL**'s oldest son **BILLY**.

While spending the night in Salina, KS, **BILL** awakened in the middle of the night of the 17<sup>th</sup> with pain in the lower right quadrant of his abdomen. He was rushed to the hospital where they found a large tumor at the juncture of the small and large intestines. It proved to be malignant so sections of his small and large intestines were removed. He spent time in intensive care and a private room. His oldest son, **Billy**, came from Lawrence, KS, stayed with **MICKIE** during the surgery. He visited his dad a few more times and also came one time with his wife, Mary. Of course **BILL** and **MICKIE** missed the wedding, but the family, including 7 grandsons, paid him a visit in intensive care on Sunday. They flew from Wichita to Cincinnati on the May 28<sup>th</sup>.

**BILL** writes that his treatment at the hospital was tremendous. **MICKIE** stayed at their hospitality house. He is convinced that the Lord was with him to have them stop in Salina on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

After returning home, **BILL** came under the care of a specialist and underwent a series of tests and began chemo treatments in September. His last treatment was to be in December.

In September, **BILLY** and **MARY** drove to Kettering for a visit and helped **BILL** get his computer updated "on line." **BILL**'s email address is <wfp1922@aol.com>. [The editor made a slight change in the address provided by **BILL**. It could not have been correct as written. He hopes this turns out to be correct.] About this time **MICKIE**'s oldest son, **TIM**, from California, also visited them.

In November **BILL** commenced working on the Y2K interface problem involving over 50 DOD systems. He has been averaging about 25 hours a week with flexible hours and days.

The day after Thanksgiving **MICKIE** was to have the cornea transplant, but in the operating room, after discovery of some bad tissue, the operation was postponed until Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**BILL** says that he is back singing in the church choir. **MICKIE** has to depend upon him driving her everywhere which she finds depressing. He says that the past year has taught them to appreciate the blessings they have received and receive each day. They "... have learned that being an optimistic Christian can make each day easier to face." His genealogical research has taken a back seat for now. They have had support from their many friends in Dayton as well as from all over the world. They now approach life just one day at a time.

They are looking forward to 1999 and the coming of the "millennium." In May 2000 his high school graduation class will celebrate its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**ROBERT J. MULVEY**, 403 from So. Yarmouth, MA, enclosed some materials with his dues payment. One was a very nice article on Gen. **GEORGE C. KENNEY** that can be found on the web site <<http://www.cdsar.af.mil/cc/kenn.html>>. The article summarizes **KENNEY**'s part in developing the 5<sup>th</sup> AAF and his philosophy of air warfare as well as his eventual falling out with the military powers in Washington and the development of the 20<sup>th</sup> AAF totally outside of his command.

Also included was an article from the "Cape Cod Times" that relates how Maj. Gen. Charles Sweeney, who piloted the plane to drop on Nagasaki the 2<sup>nd</sup> atomic bomb, piloted the only flying B-29

over Cape Cod and Martha's vineyard last July. One photo shows Sweeney at the controls of the plane. Another photo is an aerial view of the Superfortress over the tip of Martha's Vineyard. When after 52 years he again took the controls of the Confederate Air Force B-29, he recalled every control except the trim tabs. Gen. Sweeney flew *BOCK'S CAR* from Tinian Island to Nagasaki and dropped the bomb, "Big Boy," from 30,000'. The Confederate Air Force LB-30 *DIAMOND LIL* appears in the background in two of the pictures with the article.

These materials will be filed in our history folder.

Catching up with his dues and enclosing a letter is **HARVEY HAYDEN**, 19<sup>th</sup> BG and 43<sup>rd</sup> BG 65<sup>th</sup> Sqd. Gunner from Hannibal, MO. He reports that his brother **KEN HAYDEN** is 80 and doing well. **KEN** also served in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 43<sup>rd</sup> in the early days of the war.

Harvey writes that he found **RONALD FISHER's** "Legacy of Sacrifice" very good although a bit on the heavy side. He says it was good to be active at the start of the campaign, but he appreciates those who finished the campaign "...we started."

He looks back at the carefree days "...when we were on the Queen Mary. No one knew where we were or where we were headed. [It is] hard to believe that something as big as the Queen could be lost for 40 days." He recalls being dumped at a racetrack near Sydney without any means of support or even knowing why they were there. He wondered when they issued each man an Enfield rifle. They jumped around Australia until the 19<sup>th</sup> BG showed up.

He did get to use his Enfield rifle when he walked in front of the 65<sup>th</sup> Orderly room for 8 hours a day for 2 weeks after going into town on the "wrong night." At the time he noted on the bulletin board that he had been promoted to buck sergeant. He says the officers were great men, even Capt. **JIMMY HAYES** and the late Major **JOSHUA H. BARNES**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot, who caught him. He will give no more names as some of the men are still around.

**HARVEY** enjoys the Newsletter as it is almost like being there in person. He says that he could write on and on all day, but he "kinda" chokes up when writing on the heavy side. He reports that they had rain on top of 12" of snow in Hannibal in mid December.

Another optimist joins the ranks of Life Members of the Association. **LOUIS E. STEINFELD**, 63<sup>rd</sup> from Cordova, TN, says that by becoming a life member he won't have to try and remember each year whether or not he has paid his dues.

**LOUIS** edits a VFW monthly newsletter so he appreciates the effort that goes into producing such an undertaking. He hopes that we all belong to the VFW and "... support the efforts to help other veterans and veterans causes in Washington. While our numbers are becoming less, we can still achieve a great deal by speaking with one voice."

He finds it unbelievable that it has been about 55 years since we parted company and returned home to our families. He is thankful that he does not feel what the mirror shows him. He says "Hello" to all of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Association and thanks everyone for the hard work in keeping the organization going.

**RICHARD B. BELL**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Truck Mechanic from Omaha, NE, mailed **BILL** his year 2000 dues and says it is nice to see PD-99 on the October Newsletter. He has quite a collection of our Newsletters.

**RICHARD** writes that he and **FLORENCE** do not get around a great deal any more as she suffers from cancer and he has poor circulation in his legs. So they stay close to home most of the time.

He does enjoy the Newsletter and thinks it would be nice to go back to Australia to see some of the old haunts and to visit from Melbourne to Owi.

Realizing that he was falling behind with his dues **JAMES "JIM" KLINE**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot and Operations Officer from Stillwater, MN, sent a check for his '99-2001 dues. He hopes to be in Tucson for the '99 reunion.

Writing that he is late with his dues but not nearly as late as LARRY HICKEY is with the book, **LEROY JASMER**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Maintenance from Willmar, MN, wants to know just what is going on with the book. He says he can't understand where HICKEY is coming from. He writes, "The usual deal from a vanity press is to get a book out so they can get paid for it." He assumes that many members put down cash for the book at a guaranteed price. Although he does not recall the price, he thinks it was \$70. He asks what the price of the book will be when it is finally delivered and where it will be printed. [*KEN'S MEN AGAINST THE EMPIRE* is listed at \$75.00 by Barnes and Noble. It is scheduled to be printed in Florida and not Australia.]

He sends his thanks to **SAM COMMONS**, **MAX AXELSEN**, **BILL WILSON** and **JIM CHERKAUER** for keeping the Association going. He has a new area code number 320-231-2842. He encloses his e-mail address <LJasmer@willmar.com>.

Along with his '99-2000 dues **ERNEST "ERNIE" J. WELLS**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Harrisonburg, VA, sent news. He and **PEGGY** hope to make it to Tucson this year God willing.

He mentions that they enjoyed the Springfield reunion and thanks our hosts **RUSS** and **JANE BURNETT** for the fabulous job of organizing the functions. They found the tours were great.

**ERNIE** reports on the magnificent job **E. TRACY TUCCARONE**, Associate and Sweetheart of the 43<sup>rd</sup>, is doing with the web site. He sent to **TRACY** all of the photos he had from his days in the 403<sup>rd</sup>. He has also sent her floppies of the target photos he had accumulated which include the targets of Lae, Rabaul, Salamau, Wewak, Arawe and others as well as nose art from many aircraft in the area at that time. He thinks that we should consider the web site for keeping an historical record of what the 43<sup>rd</sup> accomplished in combat. He hopes others will consider having a quick-copy establishment such as Kinko's put their photos on floppy disks and sending them to Tracy for the site.

With regard to **ROY E. BAKER**, 64<sup>th</sup> Waist Gunner from Apple Valley, CA, and his request in the last Newsletter regarding anyone who could provide information about when the 43<sup>rd</sup> took over from the 19<sup>th</sup> BG, **ERNIE** writes that he knows **MITCH COBEAGA** a former Pilot is living in Las Vegas, NV. **MITCH** might be able to help **ROY** fill in those gaps.

**ERNIE's** address and phone number are 215 Nutmeg Drive, Harrisonburg, VA 22801 and 540-434-8121.

The 19<sup>th</sup> BG Association is holding its annual reunion on Sept. 17 - 21, 1999 at Drawbridge Inn, Cincinnati, OH. Contact Robert E. Ley, President, 3574 Wellston Ct. Simi Valley, CA 93036. Phone 818-703-7717.

When sending **BILL** his '99 dues, **HOWARD ROGERS** 64<sup>th</sup> Radio Operator from Beach Grove, IN, writes that it is not his age which lets him get behind but maybe it's laziness. He says he is an intermediate senior who turned 76 on Jan. 15, 1999.

He wants to know if anyone of the guys ordered any of the books by Michael Claringbould? He had heard from Michael when he was still in Fiji, but did not order any of his books. [The editor has read *BLACK SUNDAY* and *THE FORGOTTEN FIFTH* and recommends them highly. Michael is now back in Australia. His e-mail address is <mjc@albury.net.au>.]

Howard says he is having a little trouble remembering some of the past in the South Pacific but he has no problem remembering R & R in Sydney.

His wife, **WILMA**, and he are enjoying the Newsletters. He says it is great hearing what some of the old timers are doing and sends his thanks to **SAM**, **MAX**, **BILL** and **JIM** for the jobs they are doing. [That is nice artwork for your letterhead, **HOWARD**.]

**WILLIAM "BOB" GAFFNEY**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Madison, IN, mailed **BILL** his '99 dues and a letter informing us that of the death of his Copilot, **TED De FEDERICIS**. [See earlier report of this in this

Newsletter.] He writes that, "TED will be missed greatly by the rest of our crew. We need to remember LORI, his wife, and their family in our prayers."

In a letter with his '99 dues **HY MARDER** 403<sup>rd</sup> Radio Operator from Pembroke Pines, FL, says he is one of the many disappointed with the delay in our Group history. He writes that with **WILLIAM R. EATON**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Flight Engineer from Denton, TX, they sent **BRUCE HOY** a great deal of material about 10 years ago. **BRUCE** asked for replacements about 5 years ago, and **HY** furnished these too. [Bruce is no longer associated with the writing of the 43<sup>rd</sup>'s history.]

He just hopes that the book will be published and hopes it will be a much better book than that of the history of the 11<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. That history failed to name all of the men in the outfit as well as the 55 men of the Headquarters Squadron who were killed or wounded on Dec. 7, 1941. It also fails "... to mention any of the 83 men and 4 planes that took off from Hickam Field on 16 May 1942 to participate in the mop up of the Coral Sea Battle and to fly reconnaissance over the Solomon Islands prior to our troops landing on Guadalcanal." He writes that these men later joined forces, at Townsville, Australia, with the 93<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Sqd. of the 19<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. Then they joined the 435<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, and finally on Nov. 1, 1942, **HY** was transferred to the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG.

**HY** says he will just have to wait and see what develops. He phone is now 954-431-1270.

**JOHN PONTILLO**, 64<sup>th</sup> Ordinance from Massapequa, NY, updated his dues and says that he is proud to be a member of the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG Association. He says he was an "old timer" who went from Bangor, ME, to Australia to New Guinea from Nov. 1941 to June 1944. He also says that he enjoys the Newsletters very much.

Paying dues for '99 and 2000, **ROMEO E. FURIO**, 65<sup>th</sup> Maintenance from Monessen, PA, writes that he joined the 43<sup>rd</sup> at Mareeba and moved on to Port Moresby, Dobodura, Nadzab, Owi, Leyte, Luzon and finally Ie Shima. He says that Capt. **ALBERT PEPE**, 65<sup>th</sup> Armament Officer of Amherst, NY, was in charge. They serviced bombsights and autopilots. Of all of his buddies, the only one left is **EUGENE MURARI**, 65<sup>th</sup> Maintenance from St. Charles, MO.

He says that Doc **MILTON GUSACK**, 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Surgeon, should remember him as he had a thyroid "Adnoma." Doc sent him home, but they operated on him in Australia and returned him to the 65<sup>th</sup> where he remained until leaving for home from Ie Shima.

He says that he was in the hospital when the Japanese Bettys flew to Ie Shima with the Japanese peace delegation heading to Manila. He hopes to make a reunion soon. His e-mail address is <furio@mail.sgi.net>. He says, "The Newsletter is the Best."

**FRANK HOHMANN**, 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Engineer from Princeton Jct., NJ, sent e-mail and says, "Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks?" He and **VIRGINIA** sold their condo in Florida and moved back to Princeton Jct. so they could watch their new two-year-old granddaughter, **ALEX**, grow up. They have finished combining two households into one house but are having a conservatory added to the back of their place so they can raise some flowers they had in Florida.

He says that **BILL** and the editor are doing great with the Newsletters. He heard from **GEORGE CARTER** who thinks that spring would be good time for a get together. **GEORGE** thinks he will be convalesced enough at that time. **FRANK**'s e-mail address is <FPHohmann@webtv.net>.

In a rather long letter **RICHARD E. WILLIAMS**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Tail Gunner from Rapid City, SD, recalls reading in a previous Newsletter or two, mention of **DORWIN C. WILSON**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Orlando, FL. He says that when he joined the association in 1986, he studied the Roster carefully for names of men he knew and came across **WILSON**'s name. In 1993 while in Florida, he paid a visit to **DORWIN**. **DORWIN**'s wife, **LOUISE**, answered the door but said **DORWIN** was ill and did not want visitors. So

RICHARD returned to his daughter's home in Florida and phoned DORWIN, but DORWIN said he remembered very little about his time in the 403d. RICHARD left it at that.

In 1994 while reading one of our Newsletters, he noticed that LARRY HICKEY was seeking information about planes, one of which was DORWIN's B-17 *FIREBALL MAIL* which was destroyed by a bomb in Jan. 1943.

RICHARD says that in Jan. or Feb. 1943, the WILSON he knew was checking out a B-24 at Tucson. RICHARD was there as was his pilot, **ROLLO**, as well as Pilot **ERNEST WELLS**. He was confused so he wrote to their Navigator, **JOHN TALLITSCH**, of Rock Island, IL. JOHN informed him that their Pilot's first name was **DARWIN** not DORWIN.

RICHARD says that in the book *DOWN UNDER* there are photos, on opposing pages, taken on June 19, 1943 of 4 crews from the 403<sup>rd</sup>. They were the last ones included in this book. He says that a couple of these crews are standing in front of *JOLTING JANET* and one is the DARWIN WILSON crew. Another of the 4 crews is that of **ERNIE WELLS**. RICHARD says that there are a number of 403<sup>rd</sup> crews pictured in the book, and he wonders if DORWIN's crew is among them and if he was still in the 403<sup>rd</sup> when DARWIN joined it. He wonders if anyone reading this can help him clear up his confusion about the 2 WILSON crews?

RICHARD says that he finished his service at Pueblo, CO, in personnel equipment where he issued heated chutes and parachute packs. While there he ran into MANUEL an officer he knew. [It is not clear to the editor who MANUEL is, but he assumes that MANUEL had also been in the 403<sup>rd</sup>.]

**ALEX F. WYSOCKI**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Air Mechanic from Chadds Ford, PA, thanks **FRED PETERS**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Personnel from San Mateo, CA, for enlightening him about the trip from Subic Bay to Ie Shima. The 43<sup>rd</sup> left Subic Bay on July 26, 1945. The trip to Ie Shima, which was supposed to take 5 days, actually took 11 days. It seems that Mother Nature, in one of her angrier states put a TYPHOON in their path that slowed down the U.S. Navy.

Please change ALEX's area code in your Roster. His phone is now 610-388-6228.

Utilizing e-mail, **HOWARD S. BOOTH, Jr.**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot, writes that the editor is probably deluged with letters, etc., stating that the 1998 reunion was not in Colorado Springs. He has his cap from Colorado Springs and it shows 1989. HOWARD was the only person to call this to the editor's attention strange as it may seem. So our list of reunions by date and place is still undergoing changes.

HOWARD has a new address and phone as he has moved. Here is another for your Rosters folks. 4001 Constitution Ave., Fairfield, CA 94533-9707. Phone 707-399-8163. He says that his new location, since July 1998, is in a military retirement community near Travis AF Base. His e-mail address is <**Budbooth@aol.com**>.

Another who likes the Newsletters and sends his congratulation to all involved is **F. NEAL FUGATE**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from San Diego, CA. He says that the following story is one he has to get off his chest.

NEAL writes that he and **MAURICE JACK MAGORIAN**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Crew Chief from Lincoln, NE, were residents of the same small town in Nebraska, on U.S. 6 about half way between Lincoln, NE, and Denver, CO, in the '30s. In the early '40s, NEAL was in high school and JACK was a young man about town working in a grocery store. They played on the same softball team.

In June 1945, NEAL's crew joined the 43<sup>rd</sup> at Clark Field. The officers were given the duty of censoring the mail being written home by the men. He was surprised to be reading a letter JACK had written to his wife in Nebraska. That's when NEAL learned JACK was a Crew Chief in the 63<sup>rd</sup>. As a result the two had a mini reunion.

In the late '40s while NEAL was serving as a pilot with the Nebraska Air National Guard in Lincoln, NE, and finishing his studies at the Un. of Nebraska, JACK turned out to be one of the full-time Guardsmen in aircraft maintenance. So they were once again on the same team.

Later in 1951, NEAL's unit was called to active duty and our fighter wing reopened Dow AFB in Bangor, ME. Once again the two men were on active duty together.

NEAL says that he has seen JACK a couple of times at the Palisade, NE, Pioneer Days, but the next pertinent encounter was in Omaha, NE (1993) at the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG Association reunion.

NEAL writes that this is one of those small-world stories.

**PAUL NICHOLS**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Picayune, MS, writes that those of you who do not have computers and do not want the expense of purchasing one in order to view the 43<sup>rd</sup> web site, have inexpensive alternatives. You could use your local library's facilities or those of a friend or relative. You can purchase a "WEBTV" including the keyboard for about \$150 at stores like Wal-Mart. With it you can send and receive e-mail as well as visit web sites. It connects to your TV and telephone line. He says that he sits in the comfort of his living room and corresponds with a friend in Hong Kong or connects to the 43<sup>rd</sup> web site. With the click of a button he is back using his TV. He is willing to answer questions anyone might have about this sort of arrangement. His e-mail address is <p112nick@webtv.net>. [Please note that after the lower case "p" in the address there is the digit "1" followed by the lower case "L" which in turn is followed by the digit "2."]

Disappointed that he could not make the Springfield reunion and remitting his '8-'99 dues, is **STUART R. BROWN**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Lockport, NY. STUART writes that he took his B-24 training in the summer and fall of 1944 at Westover Field. He says that he not only enjoys the Newsletters, he is getting his wife, **GWEN**, to read it to.

STUART advances an interesting theory in how the editor's street home road to be called Thorncliff. It sounds good, but the editor has some serious reservations that he will not get into here.

He also is one of those who thinks that we need to assemble a delegation and go to **LARRY HICKEY**'s and confront him with regard to our history book.

STUART recommends the book, *WINGS OF MORNING*, by Thomas Childers. It is a story of an 8<sup>th</sup> AAF B-24 - the last shot down in combat in Europe.

Late word arrived by e-mail from **HOWARD BOOTH**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Fairfield, CA. He reports the sad news that his brother-in-law, **EDWARD ST. ONGE**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Bombardier/Navigator from West Melbourne, FL, died on March 15, 1999. Our prayers are with you and with **HELEN**, his wife. God Bless.

Even later as this was going to press word arrived from **CHARLES FARHA**, Headquarters Intelligence from Rockledge, FL, along with an obit for **EDWARD ST. ONGE** from the paper, "FLORIDA TODAY." JOHN wrote that he was not even aware that **EDWARD** lived in his area and that they had never met.

Another late bit of sad news is that **WILLARD J. "JOE" BROWN**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Anacortes, WA, also passed away on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Our prayers are with his good wife, **CHRIS**.

\*\*\*\*\* **QUARTERLY HUMOR** \*\*\*\*\*

The next couple of bits of humor come from **CHARLIE FARHA**.

There was a young man with a hernia  
Who said to his doctor "Gol dernia,  
When improving my middle,

A man ain't old  
When his hair turns grey  
And a man ain't old

Be sure you don't fiddle  
With matters that do not concernia."

When his teeth decay  
But-a man is ready  
For that long, long sleep  
When his mind makes appointments  
That his body can't keep.

The following comes from our President, SAM COMMONS.

The woman paid a visit to her doctor and told him that she was very bloated most of the time and passed a good deal of gas, but the amazing part was that it made no sound and had no odor. The doctor looked at her over the top rim of his glasses and said she should take the medicine he gave her for the next week and come see him again. Upon her return she told the doctor that she had no idea what was in the medicine. She said she was not as bloated, but she still passed a good deal of gas only now it had a strong odor but made no noise. The doctor looked at her and said, "Now that we've cleared up the sinuses, we'll work on the ears."

At the Springfield reunion the Association sold 1999 pocket calendars with the 43<sup>rd</sup> logo printed on the cover. This is being considered again for the Tucson reunion. These year 2000 calendars will be the last ones of the 20<sup>th</sup> century or the first of the 21<sup>st</sup> century depending upon how you count years. They will be priced at under \$5.00 if sold. In order to determine whether or not to order any of these to be printed for sale at the reunion, the Association would like to hear from those who are genuinely interested. If you would drop a post card, make a phone call or send an e-mail message to SAM COMMONS or JIM CHERKAUER to tell us that you are interested, this would be appreciated. Addresses and phone numbers are on page 1 of this Newsletter. JIM's e-mail address is <cherrj@buffnet.net>. SAM's e-mail address is <mcommons@worldnet.att.net>.

The following are being dropped from the mailing list as the addresses are insufficient or no forwarding address was available. If anyone knows the whereabouts of any of these members, please let us know.

EARL CAMPBELL  
JAMES OPPERT

MARSHA FAIR  
ANNE WEICHLEIN

RUSSELL KNUTZON

\*\*\*\*\*  
A bit of advice from those who run the registration desk at the reunions.

### **BRING YOUR NAMETAG WITH YOU TO THE REUNION.**

Those who work at registration at the reunions say that we are running out of nametags since so many members forget to bring along their nametags. 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 editor's hands absolutely no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month before publication. Please write legibly. 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 43<sup>rd</sup> 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 Postal Service will not forward the Newsletter. If you have a change of address, send BILL WILSON this change as soon as possible.

[Respectively submitted by Jim Cherkauer, Editor.]

## LATE BREAKING NEWS FROM BILL

**Francis & Anna Walker**, 65th Flight Engr. of Eustis, Fl. Sent in '99 & 2000' dues. Francis will be 82 when you get this new letter and is working on making a few more years. The Walkers enjoy the news letters and so do their kids. They send blessings to all.

**Leland & Bernadine Minarik**, Hdqrs. Rad/Open, Omaha, NE, sent in '99 dues - Says as we age our memory begins to fade. Lee thinks he may be at that point in life. Welcome to the club. He thinks Jim Cherkauer is doing a hell of a job on the news letter. (we all do) Keep 'em flying.

**Carl & Ginny Hustad**, 63rd Pilot, Edina, MN. Carl sent in dues a little late but had a great excuse, in 55 years of dealing with the public, he came up with a new excuse....It was Ginny's fault! She is on oxygen 18 hrs. a day, but still blowing and going. They have moved to a condo and have a new phone number. 1-612-944-9067 Apt. 203. Carl is a special fellow, he started the 43rd at Banger in a B18. If there are any more B18 fellows around, I can't recall any. That makes him the first 43rd pilot and a hell of a nice guy. We all send our best to Genny and Carl- God Bless.

**Maurice and Dorothy Jones**, 64th, Orlando, FL. Sent in a hundred dollars. Easy way to take care of their dues- and I can always use the money. Thinks the bunch that get out the news letter do a great job. Sorry to report the passing of Wilbert C. Norman.

**Clayton & Billie Lee Spencer**, 64th Gunner, send in a report on an incident that happened early in 1945 at Leyte. They had a carbide lamp in their tent. The Japs bombed them and they had to put the lamp out. They set it outside the tent, so they wouldn't have to smell the carbide. Their tent was next to the 63rd and every one smelt the lamp and thought it was a gas attack by the Japs and ran looking for a gas mask. Lots of excitement. Any one remember this event?

**General Johnson**, C.O. of the 43rd Airlift wing at Pope Air Force Base, came up with the idea of putting his secretary, Betty Brown on our news letter list. She can post it on the bulletin board. It's a done deal. General Johnson was a Col. when a bunch of us net him at Albuquerque. Glad to see the young fellows of the 43rd moving up.

**Cloyd J. Holt**, Kalamazoo, MT and Arcadia, FL, wants his news letter sent 1st class, so it will be sent to him where ever he is. Cloyd, we print and send about 900 news letters out every three months. The computer prints out the labels and we then printed, sack 'em, and take 'em to the post office. We also check the computer for new addresses, etc. This is all done for free, while we are trying to make a living. Not much way we could be smart enough to go through the 900 and find the 25 or so that will be some place different each time. One of our troops get two news letters each time- \$30.00 per year- two addresses.

**Shirley J. Nelson**, sister to **Charles W. Straw** (deceased)-a pilot in the 43rd, she wants to sign on- Get the news letter and letters from anyone who knew him. Address-

Shirley J. Nelson 2011-6 Woodhaven Dr., Fort Wayne, IN 46819, Phone number 219-747-2055.

**Kenneth O. Houts**, Pilot 403rd. Phone 937-845-1090, Address- 145 Solar Drive, Tipp City, Ohio 45371. Time in 403rd- 3-24-44 to 3-6-45 - On Emil Chapa Down Crew. Drop Kenneth a note and let him know we are pleased we found him.

Col. Ralph R. Ravenburg is looking for anyone that was in the 25th SQ, France Field, CZ in 1941 or Salinas, Ecuador in 1942. Ralph was later in 28th SQ 19th Bomb Group. His duty assignment was Adjutant. Address- 5000 Timerline Drive, Austin, Texas 78746-5537, Phone- 512-327-0565.

**Bert Wolfe** an RAAF fellow wants to know if there was ever any award for the Australian lads that helped fill up our crew in the very early days of the war? We had some of those boys in the 19th and 43rd - 1942 & 1943- Let me know and we'll get word to him.

**Francis Tucher**, daughter of **Tracy Tucciarone**, has us a web site on the internet. There is talk of making it officially the 43rd, etc. For now I say "Go for it!". At the Tucson Reunion we can get an O.K. from the board. I know about V-mail, I guess I'll have to learn about E-mail.

I got a call from Dr. Gusack a few days ago, that our C.O. **Col. Pettus** has a bit of trouble. He has to have shots every 30 days for six months and hopefully that will help. Treatment in an excellent hospital in Honolulu. I'm not much on the medical names. I talked to Jim, I believe it was 3-20-99, and he was home and doing O.K.. A super great fellow - give him a call or a note. We were in the RCAF together in 1941.

That's about it for now from Mary Lois and Bill. God Bless each of you.