



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

NEWSLETTER 72nd EDITION
OCTOBER 1999



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

As I review these past two years as your president and write my "swan song" I have many people to thank. Our very capable Vice President, Max Axelsen, has been busy getting ready to host our group in San Antonio next year. He is also arranging this year's golf outing in Tucson. Our secretary, Jim Cherkauer, deserves the credit for our fine newsletter, which keeps our members informed. Keep up the good work, Jim. Bill Wilson, our treasurer, oversees the printing and distribution of the newsletter from Snyder, TX. He also purchases caps, pin, etc. for the PX.

Our C.O., James Pettus, remains our fearless leader and is continuing a determined fight against lung cancer. He is in regular communications with our flight surgeon, Bud Gusack. Founder Bob Butler plays an active role as advisor and he chairs the Nomination Committee. The officers, past presidents, and squadron leaders who make up the Board or Directors have been very helpful and supportive. My heartfelt thanks to all our membership who continue to show the spirit of "All for one and one for all."

It has been a privilege to serve as your president and I can honestly say I gave it my best effort. I'm not foolish enough to think I could please everyone. Decisions have been made with careful consideration by the Board of Directors and those members present at the reunion meetings.

Truly, we are privileged to be of "The Greatest Generation," those willing to leave our families and fight the enemies of freedom until victory was won. Having survived, let us continue to serve our fellow veterans, families, churches and communities, as we are able.

Recently my wife, Helen, and our children surprised me with a 75th birthday party at a local restaurant. Our son, Matthew, printed place cards with the following quotation from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

"For age is opportunity no less than youth itself, though in another dress, and as the evening twilight fades away, the sky is filled with stars invisible by day."

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

There will be a special supplement to the Newsletter sometime before the January 2000 edition. It will be devoted primarily to the Tucson reunion. Since this October edition will be mailed out before the reunion takes place, it has been decided to produce the supplement.

Our stalwart leader, **JAMES T. PETTUS** and Pilot from Honolulu, HI, will miss our Tucson reunion on the advice of his oncologist and our own **DOC MILTON GUSACK**, Flight Surgeon from Chevy Chase, MD. After a long series of chemotherapy, JIM's immune system would not be up to the risk of an infection that could be picked up easily while mingling with so many others. JIM will be missed greatly by those who will be at the reunion. We all love you Jim and are praying for your recovery. We hope to see you next year in San Antonio.

Over the summer, the association gained several new members. The Internet and the web site have been helpful in locating men who served in the 43rd, but who have not been located until now. Not all of these men chose to join the association though. The Internet and the web site have been instrumental in locating some children of men who served in the 43rd but who are not longer with us.

ANDREW STANKO, Aerial Gunner from the 403rd, found us. He has joined the association, made a contribution, and hopes to attend the Tucson reunion. ANDREW served from August '45 to March '46. In a phone call to the secretary/editor, ANDREW says that he has located 2 former crewmembers and is trying to locate more. Add his address to your Rosters: **3904 West 76th Place, Chicago, IL 60652-1316. Phone 773-582-3019.**

Any help in locating other members of his B-24 crew #613 would be appreciated. They were:

Pilot **JOSEPH CASEY** - last known address Jackson, TN;
Copilot **JOHN GALLAHAN** - last known address: Chicago, IL;
Bombardier **KEN AHLESMEYER** - last known address Ft. Wayne, IN;
Flight Engineer **AL GONGAL** - last known address: Salamanca, NJ;
Radio Operator **ROBERT BURKE** - ANDREW has located;
Gunner **DAMON COPPESS** - ANDREW has located;
Gunner **LAVERN GREENE** - last known address: Muskegon, MI; and
Gunner **LAWRENCE TWIGG** - last known address: Cumberland, MD

E-mail sent to the secretary/editor came as quite a surprise and shock when it turned out to be from **LELAND H. "SKIP" AGARD III**. Those of you in the 65th in the latter part of the war will remember his father, **LELAND H. "HERB" AGARD II**, as a Pilot who joined the Group a day or two after it moved to Clark Field from Leyte Island. The secretary/editor was the Copilot on that crew and had been with them since October 1944. HERB went on to become Operations Officer for the 43rd shortly after the war ended. Then he became Group CO when Major **PAUL HANSEN** flew one of the B-24s back to the States in what was called the Sunset Project.

SKIP and yours truly have been corresponding via e-mail for a lengthy time now. He has been trying to fill in what took place when his father was in the 43rd. HERB was later killed in an accident in a B-47 somewhere off the coast of England. Since the secretary/editor served on HERB's crew for a little over a month in the 65th before being given his own crew, and since HERB and he shared the same tent until HERB moved to Headquarters to become Assistant Operations Officer, there has been a great deal to share with SKIP.

Some of you will remember that HERB was piloting the Group's B-25 back from Tokyo about a month after the war ended when he had to ditch the plane somewhere off the east coast of Kyushu Island, Japan, on Friday Sept, 21, 1945. After about 7 days in a dinghy with only a pint of water to share

and a severe storm, 6 men drifted ashore on that island and were rescued by the natives. Two men were lost during or shortly after the ditching. Two more died shortly after landing. The editor's navigator, Lt. **FRED WILLIAMS**, who served as navigator on the ill-fated flight, was severely injured in the ditching. They were all taken to a field hospital that the US forces had set up in Japan where they spent many days recovering. Some of the men were shipped directly back to the States and did not return to Ie Shima.

Also growing out of the correspondence with SKIP is the following information. In a previous Newsletter, there appeared an article about the sinking of the Japanese aircraft carrier, Katsuragi at Kure Bay in the Inland Sea, Japan, on July 28, 1945. Three bombardiers from the 64th were awarded the DFC for their parts in this mission. After the article appeared, the editor received several inquiries from members of the 65th who were on that mission. They wanted to know why **HERB AGARD** was not included in that story as they remembered that he led the g

Group that day and that his element was credited with scoring direct hits on the carrier. The editor was aware of that part of the story, but he had no real evidence to support such a claim. Well, SKIP has furnished the missing information.

HEADQUARTERS

FORTY THIRD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

APO 245

1 September 1945

AG 201 - AGARD, LELAND H. 0-791365

SUBJECT: Recommendation for the Distinguished Flying Cross

TO : Commanding General, Far East Air Force, APO 925 (THRU CHANNELS)

1. Under the provisions of AR 600-45, 22 September 1943, as amended, and USAAF Regulations 10-50, 27 May 1944, as amended, it is recommended that Captain Leland H. Agard, 0-791365, Air Corps, Headquarters, 43rd Bombardment Group (H), Pilot, Home Address: Mrs. Imogene E. Agard, Wife, P.O. Box #34, Starkville, Mississippi, be awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight over Japan on 28 July 1945.

2. Captain Agard, an experienced first pilot, led the 65th Squadron formation in our Group daylight strike on the Japanese aircraft carrier, Katsuragi at Kure Bay in the Inland Sea, Japan on 28 July 1945. This carrier was so severely damaged in this bombing that it listed and sank several days later. Electing to lead rather than await a late squadron, Captain Agard took his squadron in on the initial run of the day. He set a perfect course for the effective pattern bombing that followed. His formation held this course in face of a terrific bom-barrage of accurate anti-aircraft fire from large naval warships and shore installations concentrated there. Three planes in the formation were holed, including that of Captain Agard's. At least two direct hits and four near misses were scored on this carrier by his first element, one hit in an open plane elevator shaft. Two hits and other near misses scored by the second element contributed to the confirmed destruction of this 39,000 ton aircraft carrier, the first CV to be sunk by the Fifth Air Force.

Captain Agard's initiative, skill, and effective leadership as demonstrated in this mission of successful and important achievement are worthy of high commendation.

Additional information with the above recommendation has been omitted here. It is signed by

WILLIAM GOODBAN, 1st Lt., Air Corps, Co-Pilot and by JAMES T. PETTUS, JR., Colonel, Air Corps, Commanding. Capt. AGARD did receive the DFC for this mission after the war when he was stationed at Roswell, NM. Also SKIP found evidence that indicates that his dad was a Major at that time, but that the orders for his promotion did not catch up with him until nearly 2 years later.

For those of you who were in the 43rd at the time the change over was made from B-17s to B-24s, SKIP has sent a scanned copy of a photo taken from the cockpit of a B-24. The scanned photo is of rather poor quality and will not be reproduced here. In front of the B-24 in formation are at least 4 other B-24s, but in front of them are at least 2 but probably 3 single tail 4-engine aircraft. Did the B-24s and B-17s fly together in the same formation on missions? SKIP found this photo among the belongings of his dad. The source of the photo is unknown. It is possible that it did not involve the 43rd at all. HERB did not join the 43rd until long after the transition to B-24s.

SKIP has joined our association as a lifetime associate member. His address, phone number and e-mail address follow. 62 Potters Lane, Savannah, TN 38372-8633. Phone - 901-962-2261. E-mail address - <traderskip@centuryinter.net>.

LEWIS DAWS, 65th Aircraft Maintenance from Rialto, CA, mailed to the editor a package of materials and photos. A good deal of this material is not dated, so it is impossible for the editor to know for certain when some related events took place.

He included a page of photos of B-24 *BLACK MAGIC*. One shows Anette (Toni) Robin painting the grass skirt clad New Guinea native girl on the nose of the plane. Toni had been a commercial artist prior to the war before becoming a Red Cross worker in NG. This picture also appears on the 43rd web site as a 64th plane. It was transferred to the 65th, but that is not noted on the web site. It was a 65th plane when it crashed on take-off. Two pictures of the wreck are included with his material. An Australian RAAF crew, except for crew chief, was flying the plane at the time of its crash.

In a clipping called "SNAPSHOTS FROM WW II" there is LEW with carbine in hand standing before a plane which could be either a B-17 or B-24 in New Guinea. It tells how LEW enlisted before the US entered WW II and later traveled to Sydney on the Queen Mary. He married a local girl, DOREEN, to whom he is still married. He worked on B-17s and B-24 in Australia and NG before being rotated home where he arrived on New Year's Eve 1944. DOREEN was able to join him in 1945.

Another article tells how LEW was stationed at Norton AFB from 1953 to June 1972 when he retired. While there he "worked in the docks, on the flight line, TDY repair teams, missiles, missile supply and the last five years with MAAC in aero repair." One of his jobs was in preparing F-102s and TF-102s for return to the Air Force. TF-102s are side-by-side 2-seater trainers. On test flights it was necessary to have 2 persons aboard, so he asked if he could ride in the copilot's seat. The answer was in the affirmative but he had to get checked out in a pressure chamber course at March AFB. After he was checked out, he took one flight with a pilot who took off and flew straight up to 40,000'. "That was a far cry from the many test flights I had on B-17s and B-24s during World War II." LEW had the controls for a time but declined to try to do a barrel roll when invited to do so. LEW said that was his only flight he had in a TF-102 but he will always remember it.

Among the other materials from LEW is a copy of one page from an early edition of a newspaper called the Leyte-Samar *FREE PHILIPPINES* dated Nov. 23, 1944. It brings the people up to date with what is going on shortly after their freedom from Japanese occupation. One article tells of the re-opening of schools in Leyte. Another article is on the RAAF Construction Gangs building airstrips on New Guinea. Yet another relates the experiences of RAAF flying personnel assigned to USAAF squadrons flying B-24s.

LEW has a copy of the front page of the *OCEAN DAILY NEWS* from Thursday, March 5, 1942. It would appear to the editor that this was an in-house paper while the 43rd was being transported to Syd-

ney on the Queen Mary. The feature article is "U.S. AIRCRAFT CARRIER ATTACKED BY JAPS." It tells how 18 Japanese aircraft attacked the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier and its guardian cruisers and destroyers west of the Gilbert Islands on Tues., March 3, 1945. Its fighters shot down 16 of the enemy planes with the loss of 2 of its own planes and one pilot. In reality the carrier was not even scratched.

Last but not least is an article on the finding of a wreck of the B-24 *BEAUTIFUL Betsy* in Australia some 49 years after it was lost on Feb. 26, 1945, during stormy weather. It had a crew of Americans and Australians. One crewman, a Spitfire pilot Roy Cannon, was returning to Brisbane at the time to marry his sweetheart. His best man was also on that flight. The finding of this wreckage was believed to close a chapter in the history of lost planes in Australia from WW II. It was discovered by Wildlife rangers back-burning dense bushland.

Lew writes that he joined the 43rd in Bangor, ME, with a group of men who had just come from A/C Mechanic Training school as he did. He was one of those who rode the Queen Mary to Sydney where he landed on March 28, 1942. He sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge on Christmas Eve in 1944 on his way home. His bother-in-law was a bartender close to the railway station in San Francisco. So Lew spent New Years Eve there until the bar was closed.

While in the 43rd, Lew became a Crew Chief with men working under him. At Owi he became a Line Chief and had 4 crews working under him. He was assigned a Jeep and drove as many as 19 others on it at one time. When a 43rd B-24 was down on an island under the command of the 13th AAF, he was flown to that island in a noisy B-25. He says that the food there was great and it was the first time he had Spam in all his time overseas. When he returned to Owi, he was given his orders to head to Hollandia on his way home to the States.

The B-29 Superfortress Historical Association, Inc., 1143 Glenview Road, Santa Barbara, CA 93108-2001 has been organized to raise money to have a bronze war bird sculpture placed in the sculpture garden at the U.S. Air Force Academy. It says that it is the only heavy bomber from WW II not represented. They intend to fund a 1/7th scale Bronze B-29 to join the 6 other WW II warplanes on the Honor Court of the Air Force Academy. It will be sculpted by Robert Henderson. If any group or individual would like to have a name inscribed, the cost is \$900 per name. You are limited to 20 spaces. Space is limited so the placement of names on the sculpture will be on a first-come first-serve basis. Make checks out to the above named association. Phone and Fax are 805-969-2796.

FRANK HOHMANN, 65th Flight Engineer from Princeton Jct., NJ, says that while researching his tour of duty in the 19th BG and the 43rd BG in the SWPA by using the Internet, he came across an Aussie chap who has built a site on the Web about the Fenton and Long Airdromes south of Darwin, AUS. The 380th BG was stationed there and, the 64th flew out of one or both of these places in 1942. Clinton Bock is the creator of the web site. He would like to talk to any 64th man who is on the Internet and was in Fenton or Long in 1942. His e-mail address is <bock@octa4.net.au>. FRANK feels that it is in this way that we will ever know our history.

He says that he and **VIRGINIA** are enjoying pretty good health and hope that this continues. They have kept busy getting "... this old house up to date because tomorrow we may not be able to take care of any problems that come up, Rainy day and all that stuff."

FRANK says that he enjoys the newsletters and hopes that the staff can keep up the good work.

Late in June **HOWARD BOOTH**, 63rd Pilot from Fairfield, CA, was wondering about the copies of the Newsletter which had blank even numbered pages except for 2. He had not received a replacement after his first inquiry. [The matter was taken care of pronto. Sorry about the mix-up Howard.]

Our president **SAM COMMONS** received a phone call from **DOROTHY CHRISTIAN** who had notified us earlier this year of the death of her husband, **RAY CHRISTIAN**, 64th Cook from Pennsau-

ken, NJ, last September 12, 1998. She had not seen any notice of RAY's passing in the Newsletter since then. We apologize for this oversight. God Bless.

A very nice letter came from **HELEN BAUDER**, Associate from Omaha, NE. HELEN writes that although she does not know any of the men in the Newsletter, she reads it entirely as soon as he receives it. She likes to read about the 64th as that is the squadron of her late husband, **BILL BAUDER**. It brings back memories of his telling her of such places as Dobodura, Lae, Owi, Nadzab, Leyte and Tomlinson.

She enclosed a very generous contribution to the association to help in whatever way it is needed.

HELEN recalls BILL telling her "... about having his R&R in Australia and eating lobster every day. That was his favorite. Bill passed away 13 years ago."

She is still active at 83 years and is in the Millard American Legion and Auxiliary color guard and keeps up with the young ones in the guard. She enjoys doing volunteer work for the veterans, and is looking forward to the next Newsletter. She will not be able to attend the Tucson reunion.

L. DAYTON BLANCHARD, 65th Pilot from Cloudercroft, NM, still insists that his mission on Aug. 7, 1945, was flown to Kumamoto, Japan, as shown on his pilot's navigation chart he "stole" from the 65th Sqdn. Navigation section. This despite the fact that **ELDON "BUD" LAWSON**, 65th Bombardier from Bay Village, OH, and the editor disputed his target in the previous Newsletter [p 9]. [The editor kept meticulous records. The Aug. 7th mission was against Tsuiki Airdrome on Kyushu, Japan, just as BUD has indicated. Do any of you wonder why it is difficult to write an accurate history of our Bomb Group? At this late date even we can't agree of what took place at times.]

He enclosed a check for his 2001 dues plus a donation to the association.

The BLANCHARD's report a second address. They will maintain their residence in Cloudcroft, NM, for the months of April through mid October as their summer residence. They will have a winter residence the remaining time at **3704 Hunters Glen, Cibolo, TX 78108**. At the time of this writing they did not have a phone for their winter residence.

They will not be attending the Tucson reunion, as they will be moving to Texas at that time. DAYT writes that his other reunion group recently held a reunion in Tucson and he had the opportunity to visit all of the places of interest mentioned in our reunion notices. They also visited Fort Huachuca that has an interesting museum, good food and is the winter home of the North American hummingbirds.

DAYT says that he ran into **ROSEMARY** and **KENNETH BROWN**, 64th Pilot from El Paso, TX, in Cloudcroft in mid July.

DAYT and ANN will be attending his Pilot's Class reunion in August in Pampas, TX. DAYT was in the Class of 44F.

He wonders where our reunion will be in 2000. [This will be held in San Antonio, TX, in the latter part of August. There should be more news about this coming shortly from **MAX AXELSEN**, 403rd Pilot from San Antonio and Vice President of the Association. He and **MARGARET** will be hosting the reunion in 2000.]

ANN was recently chosen for the honor of "Horticulturist of the Year" for all of New Mexico. In addition to her fine watercolor painting, she also gardens extensively. It is for this latter work that the Garden Clubs of New Mexico bestowed such a fine honor on her. Congratulations Ann!

The DAYTONs celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary June 4th this year. DAYT says it may not be a big deal for many of our members, but it is for them. He enclosed a copy of an article that appeared in several newspapers in the country. It is a short biography of their life together since their marriage in Chippewa Falls, WI, on June 4, 1949. In a nutshell, DAYT served as a pilot and meteorologist in his career in the Air Force. They resided on 3 continents and have three children, Deborah,

David and Andrew. Dayt retired from the 23rd NORAD Region Air Defense Command in 1973 as a Lt. Colonel. Since retirement they have resided in San Antonio, TX, and Cloundcroft.

E-mail from **GREG LAKE** of Centerville, MA, reports that his dad, **NORMAN H. O'BRIEN JR**, 63rd from Perrysburg, OH, passed away in January of 1999. God Bless.

Greg is interested in hearing from anyone who might have any information about or pictures of his dad during his service in the 63rd. His e-mail address is <GML12@PRODIGY.NET.

NICHOLAS ARABINKO, 64th Pilot from Punta Gorda, FL, has come up with suggestions about how we should organize our association for the purpose of recruiting members. He suggests that one way would be to appoint a recruitment person from each of the 4 squadrons. Another suggestion that he puts forth for consideration is to divide the country into 4 areas: SE, SW, NE and NW, and have a person from each area in charge of recruitment in that area. He also wonders if some of our younger Associate members might want to undertake such a task. He writes that "... some of us 'old duffers' can hardly get up from our rockers let alone pen a letter, hit a key with our elbow or dial a telephone, but we are still dedicated to our Group and would help if we could."

[The above suggestions are good food for thought. The editor believes that anyone involved with recruiting new members for the association should have access to the Internet. The overwhelming number of new contacts made in recent months has been via the Internet. Any volunteers?]

After finishing reading the July Newsletter, **ROMEO FURIO**, 65th Aircraft Maintenance from Monessen, PA, sent along e-mail saying that he wished he could remember some of the names of those he knew in the 43rd from Mareeba through Ie Shima. He left to return to the States in Oct. 1945.

He will miss the reunion in Tucson, as he will be in Boulder City, CO, visiting his children at that time. He says that if **EUGENE MURARI**, 65th Bombsight Maintenance from St. Charles, MO, is there, to say "Hello" to him.

Many of our men served out of Clark Field in the latter part of the war. When Mt. Pinatubo blew its top a few years ago, it was virtually abandoned. Some have wondered what has become of that base since then. **LUCILLE** and **REGINALD E. TATRO**, 65th Radio Operator from Greenfield, MA, have provided the answer to that question.

Their eye doctor comes from that section of the Philippines and returns frequently to visit his 97-year-old mother. The base has been converted partially into the Mimosa Golf Resort operated by Holiday Inn. He reports that the course is beautiful since trees, shrubs, flowers, etc., have been planted there. The rest of the base is a tax-free haven just like Subic Bay. The old airfield is being groomed to be another international airport like the one in Manila.

The former homes around the golf course have been converted into villas that cost \$195.00 per night with a 10% service charge. It was necessary to truck in tons of topsoil and plant grass to create the golf course. The area had been covered with up to 15' of ash and rocks. **LUCILLE** said that they had seen pictures of the area that looked like the surface of the moon before the reconstruction was started. Balibago, outside the main gate, was totally wiped out. It had been the center for the plastics industry. She says that it is slowly coming back from the devastation.

REG served two tours of duty at Clark Field, first in the 50s and then the 60s. **REG** went to Vietnam from there, while **LUCILLE** and their 3 children stayed at Clark Field.

REG has not been up to par lately. A stress test showed that one of his three bypass grafts is not holding up too well after about 14 years. He has had to get a new cardiologist who is right on top of **REG**'s problem. For the time being **REG** has opted to use the option of additional medication to help alleviate his discomfort, but he does not know what the doctor will advise for the future.

E-mail from **JAMES T. MURPHY**, 63rd Pilot from Huntsville, ~~AL~~⁵¹, and immediate past president of the association, brought the sad news that his Flight Engineer, **ALBERT F. TUBBESING** from Lake Ozark, MO, passed away last April. Our condolences to his wife **SUE**. God Bless.

Late in July the secretary/editor received a phone call from **BOB BRICK** from the 403rd. BOB's name is not in our Roster. The editor assumes that he wrote the correct last name down during the conversation. BOB wanted the address and phone number of **JOHN M. BUSLINGER**, 64th Tail Gunner from Palm Bay, FL.

Bob says that he still flies his biplane, *TITTS SPECIAL*, and continues to belong to the Experimental Aircraft Association. He tries to attend its annual reunion each year in Oshkosh, WI.

He says that he was recalled for the Korean War and flew B-36s in that engagement. He hopes to make it to Tucson, and says that he enjoys the Newsletters.

Once again the Internet has helped another individual find out about our association. E-mail from **ALAN MATISOFF** related how he is the son of the late **JACK L. MATISOFF**, Huntington Beach, CA, who served in the 64th as Nose gunner from Jan. 1943 to April 1944. JACK passed away in 1988. ALAN writes that he had heard that our April 1999 edition of the Newsletter contained information about **MEYER LEVIN**, 64th. He indicated, as reported in one of our many stories about MEYER, that his dad survived that fatal B-17 crash which took the life of MEYER. ALAN was mailed a copy of the 3 Newsletters with MEYER LEVIN stories as well as an application for associate membership. Alan has left a message on our web site.

In additional e-mail, he says that he has read the April Newsletter from cover to cover twice and then passed it on to his brother. He regrets that he did not get involved with the 43rd Association sooner. He and his brother know that their dad was a nose gunner when he flew in B-24s, so they assume that was his position when he flew B-17s.

ALAN is sending a collection of newspaper articles to **ARTHUR BARRET**, son of MEYER in Australia. He is sure that his dad would have wanted that to be done.

ALAN has been in contact by e-mail with the secretary/editor and **TRACY TUCCIARONE**, 43rd Web Site creator and Associate member from Indianapolis, IN.

He sent the editor, via e-mail, a series of photos scanned from his dad's WW II collection. Most are of men in the 64th including what must be the crew on which his dad served. They were posed before the plane, *LUCKY LUCILLE*. This photo is dated 2 MAR 44.

ALAN's address is 14883 Steep Mtn. Dr., Draper, UT 84020. His phone is 801-501-7422. His e-mail address is <alan.matisoff@sic2002.org>.

LEW DAWS has sent the editor a photo of the nose art of *MILLION \$ BABY*. He writes that it is too bad that the serial number did not come out better. With a magnifying glass the editor can read most of the serial number. What it seems to be is **AIR FORCES SERIAL NO. 44-40335**. The nose writing shows clearly - **U.S. Army B-24-J C.D. 156**.

PAUL H. COBER, 403rd Pilot from New Oxford, PA, sent the secretary/editor a copy of the diary of his Nose Gunner, **JOHN J. PERKINS** from Dallas, TX. It covers his entire tour in the SWPA from Sep. 22, 1943, when he left the States for New Guinea, until he arrived back in San Francisco, CA, on Sep. 11, 1944.

In addition to this diary, PAUL enclosed his complete diary record of his crew from Topeka, KS, until he and the other 2-surviving officers left New Guinea to fly back to the States. PAUL used JOHN's diary in places. He also used his logbook and his official "Form 5" record plus other information to create his document. This 20-page diary will be reproduced in serial form in this and the next 3

editions of the Newsletter. It will appear near the end of each Newsletter. [The editor reserves the right to abbreviate, condense or make other minor changes which do not change the message of this diary.]

PAUL writes that he made this record at the time the association engaged LARRY HICKEY, Associate from Boulder, CO, to write the history of the 43rd. He has other copies of both of these documents. [When the editor is finished with these documents, he will mail them to our historian, BUD LAWSON to be placed in the archives and made an official part of the history of the 43rd.]

PAUL says that he rose from 2nd Lt. to Capt. in just 5 months as "...we were survivors."

Reading in the July Newsletter of CARL CRAMER, 64th Pilot and C.O. from Sutherlin, OR, flying home after the war in B-24 *MILLION DOLLAR BABY*, SAMUEL E. WELBORN, 64th Flight Engineer from Naples, FL, phoned the editor to get CARL's phone number.

SAM served on the crew of HARRY STEVENSON, 64th Pilot from San Diego, CA. They picked up a new B-24 at Hamilton Field for a flight to the SWPA. They had *MILLION DOLLAR BABY* painted on the nose of the plane that they then flew to Hawaii and on to Townsville, AUS. SAM says that was the last time he remembers seeing the plane. He wanted to fill CARL in about the plane.

Three photos of *million \$ Baby* arrived from J. KENT MILTON, 403rd Armorer/Gunner from Clairton PA. One is a full 8.5" x 10" photo. Scans were made of all of the photos of *million \$ Baby* and sent to TRACY TUCCIARONE to place on the web site. KENT also enclosed a large photo of him standing by the plane and the nose art. This too has been transmitted to TRACY.

KENT had phoned SAM COMMONS about these photos, and SAM advised him to send them on to the editor.

[The editor has received several photos of the B-24s *BLACK MAGIC* and *million \$ Baby*. He has noticed that in these photos the names appear in different styles and size lettering in different pictures. Were there more than one of each of these planes in the respective squadrons? Did the names get repainted from time to time as they faded with age? The editor would like to have response to these questions since seeing the names in different lettering causes some confusion as to whether these photos are of the same planes.]

Additional photos arrived via SAM COMMONS from LYLE P. HEINEKE, 64th Waist Gunner from Benson, IL, of "*MILLION \$ BABY*." [The editor has tried to reproduce the names of this plane, in this paragraph and those above, in type similar to what appears in the photos. In LYLE's photos the name is in block type capital letters. These also will be scanned and sent on to TRACY.]

LYLE writes that he was an armorer/gunner in the 64th and his crew flew this plane many times. He says that ED ROSS [not listed in our Roster] was their pilot and ED hopes to make it to the Tucson reunion. God willing, LYLE says that he and BETTY will be there also.

LYLE also enclosed a color photo of the back of his flight jacket. It shows a hand painted 64th B-24 with the nose art of *MILLION \$ BABY* as well as other beautiful artwork.

All of this came about when LYLE read in the July edition of this Newsletter, that CARL CRAMER, 64th CO and Pilot from Sutherlin, OR, had written that his crew had flown this plane back to the States after the war ended.

Another phone call came from JOHN H. PICKERING, 64th Pilot from Punta Gorda, FL. JOHN reported that the July Newsletter, he had just finished reading, was great.

He says that when he worked at the hydrogen bomb plant in New Mexico, AL YOUNG, 19th BG Bombardier from St. George, UT, was his inspector. They have stayed in contact with each other for about 10 years by snail mail, e-mail and when attending the same reunions. Both attend the reunions of the 19th BG.

JOHN said that he gave LARRY HICKEY all of his materials about the war that included a wealth of material his dad had saved for him during the war. Unfortunately, he has never seen any of this material again. JOHN says that in the material he "loaned" to LARRY was information about and a photo of MEYER LEVIN. He also provided LARRY with a picture of *CHIEF SEATTLE*, a B-17 mentioned in previous Newsletters and that was assigned to the 43rd about the time the 19th BG was being shipped back to the States.

He told the secretary/editor that it was simply too far for him to go to Tucson for the reunion.

ROBERT TINSMAN of Stuart, FL, reported the passing of his mother, STELLA TINSMAN of Ft. Pierce, FL, widow of the late JOSEPH TINSMAN a Tail Gunner from the 63rd. ROBERT writes that both his parents "... enjoyed the friendships that they made through attendance with your group functions and were both proud to have served in the Armed Forces." God Bless.

Sending the treasurer his dues for 1999 & 2000 with a generous contribution for other expenses is JOUBERT S. "MAC" McCREA, Jr., 65th Pilot from Alexandria, VA.

MAC says that he really enjoys the newsletter and finds that it is "very enjoyable to read, even by someone not a member."

He makes reference to the April and July 1999 Newsletters and missions over Japan proper. He says that his August missions were on the 7th, 10th and 25th. He recalls his plane taking a flak hit on the bomb run on the 10th with only minor damage occurring. On the 25th he flew over Japan at 5,000' with no bombs aboard. The weather was clear, the visibility was great and they saw no flak or fighters. [After hostilities ceased the 43rd flew a number of such missions over Japan. We were told that they were test flights to make sure that the enemy had ceased its action in the war.]

JOEL says that although his memory is fading, he thinks that he flew a mission to Hong Kong on July 12th, 16th or 20th. They carried 50-gallon drums of NAPALM, a scary bomb load, and the objective was to start fires in the harbor. JOEL says that this mission was covered in a previous Newsletter.

On the night of June 23rd, he and his crew conducted a solo, radar mission in a new B-24-M to Canton, China, not too far from Hong Kong. "I recall leaving Clark near sunset and getting back to Clark 14 hours later, early on the 24th of June. JIM PRINGLE was bombardier. I think that particular B24 M (radar equipped) was one of several in the 43rd during the time I was in the 65th. It was indeed a very good FORD airplane."

He writes that when he flew back to the States in operation SUNSET, he was fortunate to get to fly a new B-24M. He left Clark on Nov. 7, 1945, and made his final stop at Sacramento, CA, on Nov. 12, 1945.

MAC enclosed a blurb from "MINICRAFT MODEL KITS" for a plastic model kit for *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. The blurb and the box in which the kit comes contain a number of statements that are incorrect. Among these errors is the claim that the plane was painted at Clark Field in July 1944 as well being a 65th aircraft. MAC's son did assemble one of the kits this past summer.

ROCCO J. ARRUIZZO, 63rd Tail Gunner from Milnesville, PA, wrote our president, SAM COMMONS, in July that it was hard to believe that it was almost 54 years ago that WW II ended. He finds that he reflects more and more on his exploits in the Pacific as he grows older.

He had read in the July Newsletter about the Collings Foundation B-24J which had been *THE ALL AMERICAN* and now *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. He recalls the plane coming to the local airport several times. It brought back memories especially as he sat at the Tail Gunners turret.

ROCCO enclosed a photo of the nose art of *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL* that had been taken on Ie Shima in 1945. He says that he is sorry that it is not in color, but we did not have color film then.

He thinks that the staff "... must put an awfully lot of time on your 'newsletter' publication." He enjoys reading it and encourages all to keep up the good work.

ROCCO apologizes for his writing which he is doing while sitting on his front porch in 88° F heat. He finds that the heat wave the East has been having is really something. He keeps telling his wife, JO, that he served in the South Pacific from New Guinea to Japan and never minded the heat as he does now. He hopes autumn is more comfortable. He hopes for a miracle so he can get to Tucson.

A sad note comes from STELLA RESHAW of Lafayette, IN, who reports the death of her late husband, EARL L. RESHAW, 65th Pilot, on April 17, 1999. EARL served in the 43rd as well as in Korea. God Bless.

FRED HAGEN, Associate member from Philadelphia, PA, is seeking help. As most of you know FRED had made several trips to New Guinea and has recovered the remains of the crews from several aircraft he has located in the area. He is attempting to locate the families of the men who died when B-25D-1, #41-30182, 38th Bomb Group, 71st Bomb Squadron crashed on a flight that departed from Sidor on a shuttle flight to Nadzab on July 1, 1944 @ 0907.

The men aboard were:

Pilot Richard Hurst, 1st Lt.

Navigator Aloysius Steele, 2nd Lt.

Gunner Henry Miga, Sgt.

Passenger B. Durham, PFC

Passenger G. Norris, Cpl.

Co-Pilot James Henderson, 1st Lt.

Radio/Gunner John Creighton, PFC

Passenger A. Milazzo, TEC 5

Passenger S. Russell, PFC

FRED has located the family of Henry Miga. Any help that any of you might give FRED would be appreciated. [The editor searched the Internet without success in attempting to find a Web site for the 38th BG.] FRED's address is 5209 Knorr St., Philadelphia, PA 19135. His e-mail address is <ahagen@voicenet.com>.

Our treasurer, WILLIAM H. WILSON, Jr., 65th Pilot from Snyder, TX, reports the passing of CARL A. HUSTAD, 63rd Pilot from Edina, MN. BILL says that CARL was the last of the "First Pilots." [The editor assumes that is of the B-17 era in the 43rd]. Carl leaves his widow, GINNY. God Bless.

More sad news comes from SANDRA DeMELFY who reports the death of her father, EARL PEIFLY of Whitehall, PA, on April 15, 1999. Despite the fact that she lost a loved one, she writes "...God Bless all the veterans that fought in wars so we could enjoy the place we have today." God Bless.

ROBERT "BOB" ROTH, 403rd Gunner from Redlands, CA, read an article in the No. 67 WINTER 1998 BRIEFING of interest to him. Bob sent a letter to the author, GLENN "TOM" CONWAY, 65th Flight Engineer from Rome, GA. Bob wrote that he rarely sees anything about the "Forgotten Air Force," and it is even more rare to see something about the 43rd BG. Since TOM mentioned this editor's name in the article, BOB said that he should contact the editor and get an application to join our association.

[TOM and the secretary have corresponded a couple of times and TOM has been invited to join us. It has been his choice not to do so. An article in the April issue of this Newsletter mentioned him. TOM was on the crew of our last 65th wartime CO, Major MAX WILLIAMS.]

In the January 1999 Newsletter KEN L. DAWSON, 403rd Pilot from Cibolo, TX, had asked about "BLACK SUNDAY." Filling in with some information about this day in the history of the 5th AAF is the following information from BOB ROTH.

BOB writes that this was Sunday, 16th April 1944 when the 5th Airforce sent everything that would fly to Hollandia and a massive frontal system blocked off our safe return home. "I wrote and told him about Australian Author Michael J. Claringbould's book 'BLACK SUNDAY - THIRD EDITION. [See information about Claringbould's books later in Newsletter.]

At the time BOB could not locate his copy of the book, so he ordered another. When he got the book he read of the accounts of the horrible day given by **T/SGT SAMUEL COMMONS**, 65th Flight Engineer from Flourtown, PA, **2/LT ROBERT HANKS**, 65th from Watertown, NY, and **2/LT JOSEPH ESPOSITO**, 65th Navigator from Malverne, NY. "I remembered the accounts given by **MAJOR JAMES PETTUS**, Group Leader [and Pilot from Honolulu, HI], **T/SGT WILLIAM SOLOMON** (our radioman) [403rd from Sarasota, FL], **2/LT. P. HAYDEN CLARK** (our co-pilot for the mission) [403rd from Batsmouth, NH] and our pilot **CAPTAIN ERWIN ZASTROW**. I did not think much about not remembering SAM's and the others accounts, as I did not know them in 1997. Yesterday I located my 'lost' book. The reason I did not remember Sam and the others [is] they were not in it. Both books say THIRD EDITION MAY 1997 but they are not the same. The old book contains 86 pages while the new one has 116 pages. I am glad I have the new version. I only wish I had **KEN L. DAWSON**, (Now Colonel Dawson USAF - Ret.) 403rd pilot's account of that sad day.

BOB goes on to say that Claringbould claims BOB's plane dropped eight 1000#torpex bombs on Hollandia, despite the fact that BOB had written to Michael in 1995 and explained that this was not correct. The torpex bombs were dropped on 1-2-44 on Saidor. The concussion at 10,000' feet "... almost shook our plane apart." The next morning our forces landed there and secured the base. The next time he heard of Saidor was on Black Sunday. It was a friendly strip but was blocked by wrecked planes.

BOB cites **HAYDEN CLARK**'s of Feb. 25, 1996 on the mission to Hollandia and Black Sunday. "Mission #34 Captain Zastrow Pilot, I was Co-pilot. Target. Supply Area Hollandia. Bombs - 8 x 1000 lbs. No Ack Ack or Interceptions. Weather roughest I ever hope to fly in. Made a forced landing at Finchhaven [Finschhafen, P.N.G.] with 125 Gals. of gas left. Many planes of all types made water landings and crashed at Saidor. Hope I never have to sweat a mission again like that one. Time 8 hrs. 45 min."

In a later letter, BOB sent the editor a copy of *MILLION \$ BABY* a B-24. In the picture is the late **PHILIP C. TRAVERS, Jr.**, Assistant Radio Operator. **PHILIP** was originally the nose gunner on the crew, but when he earned an extra stripe, he flew as Radio Operator and BOB took over he nose gunner's position. BOB says they were the oldest crew in the newest plane. The Pilot of the crew, **CAPT. ZASTROW**, often flew as Squadron leader or Group leader. Other than BOB the only men left from that crew are navigator **LEE LOUGHREY** of West Chester, PA, and Radio Operator, **BILL SOLOMON**.

BOB has had a case of the shingles. He says that he has to feel a good deal better or he won't make it to Tucson, but he is hoping for the best.

JAMES A. OTTINGER, 65th Pilot from Allentown, PA, has mailed in his check for dues for 1999 & 2000.

From Bremerton, WA, **WILLIAM L. JOBE**, 64th Radio/Gunner, writes that he really enjoys reading the Newsletter. He says that his Bombardier, **HERBERT J. MAXWELL**, lives in Rochester, NY, where he worked 42 years for Eastman Kodak. **HERB** told **WILLIAM** that his health is failing but he is struggling through. **Herb** is not a member of our association, but the secretary will send him a copy of the July Newsletter and an application form in the hopes that he will join us. His address for those who remember him is **23 Veldor Park, Rochester, NY 14612-1929**. His phone is **716-865-8000**. Why not encourage him to join our association?

WILLIAM cites an article in the August issue of *READERS DIGEST* on the Komodo Dragons that attain a length of over 10' and weight up to 200 pounds. They reportedly can out-run a man. WILLIAM says that he wrote in his diary of meeting one while in New Guinea. He says no one knew anything about them at that time. He wonders if any others of you readers met up with one in New Guinea? His pilot, **HANK" DOMAGALSKI**, made a cute cartoon for WILLIAM about his meeting up with a Komodo Dragon. It shows 3 dragons at the bar at the **KOMODO DRAGONS BAR & GRILL**. One dragon says, "Hey Pops! Tell us again about the time you encountered that fearless '**LOUISIANA HUNTER**' way back in 1944!" (**BILLY JOBE** by name.)

BILL wants to complete his entry in our Roster before the new one is printed. Most of the information is shown above. He served in the era of the 40s. His phone number is **360-692-4736**.

JOHN PICKERING, 64th Pilot from Punta Gorda, FL, phoned the editor to say that he had heard from **JOY** and **ARTHUR BARRET** from Australia. You should recall the article about them in the July 1999 Newsletter. **ARTHUR** is the son of the late **MEYER LEVIN**. They reported that they had been informed that a recreation room at West Point had been named in honor of **MEYER**. **ARTHUR**'s mother, who is 88 years of age, is now blind. **JOY** reported that the Pentagon had sent **ARTHUR** a photo of **MEYER** along with his fingerprints and other unspecified materials.

JOHN says that he will attend the reunion of the 19th BG in Sept. in Ft. Mitchell, KY, but he will pass on our reunion as it is too far for him to travel. He is now on the Internet. His e-mail address is <pickbuzz@isni.net>.

Along with his check for his 2000-year dues, **LARRY E. MAIN**, 65th Pilot from Tulalake, CA, reminds us that his area code has changed. In case you did not get this change in an earlier Newsletter, here it is again. **LARRY**'s and **LOIS**'s phone number is **530-667-3397**. They plan to be in Tucson.

EDWIN "LES" JOHNSON, from the 63rd, reports a change of address. His new address for your Rosters is **1011 La Mesa Lane, Lady Lake, FL 32159**. The new phone is **352-751-0047**.

ROBERT B. MURPHY, 63rd Navigator from San Jose, CA, sent the secretary/editor a very interesting 10.5" x 10.5" topographic map of **VUNAKANAU AERODROME (NEW BRITAIN)**. Of course for those of you who were in the war in its early stages, **RABAU** is clearly shown. The map shows the locations of anti-aircraft guns as well as the placement of searchlights. [Bob, if you don't want this map returned, the editor will make a copy and send the map to our historian, **ELDON "BUD" LAWSON**, 65th Bombardier from Bay Village, OH, to place in the archives of the 43rd. Unless you inform the editor otherwise, that is what he will do.]

Mailing **BILL** dues for 1999 & 2000 is **CYNTHIA L. McGUIRE** for her husband, **JAMES F. McGUIRE**, 63rd Radio Operator from Scarborough, ME. **CYNTHIA** writes that **JIM** enjoys reading the Newsletter and be sure that his name is still on the mailing roster.

She says that they are doing fine in Maine although they had a hot summer. Many people who came to Maine in the summer escape the heat found temperatures in the 90s a good deal of the time this year. She expresses concern whether or not our history book will get to us soon, as none of us is getting any younger.

RANDY BOUTWELL, 65th Nose Gunner from Hoover, AL, is now a Life Member. **RANDY** sent **BILL** a check for his life membership as he tends to forget to pay them each year and thus falls behind. He also reported to **BILL** that he gets two newsletters with each mailing, one to **FRANCIS** and one to **RANDY**. That should be cleared up before the next mailing.

He is looking forward to Tucson, especially since he missed the Springfield reunion.

ROBERT S. CUTLER, Headquarters from Quincy, MA, has paid his dues through the year 2000. He does not want **GEORGE L. WHITE**, 63rd Ball Gunner from Chatham, NJ, to get after him.

He mentions three of our members who have passed away and wondered if this had been reported in the Newsletter. The first two, **WILSON "BILL" KING**, Headquarters from Louisville, KY, and **JOHN ROCHE**, 64th Operations from New Haven, CT, have been noted in the past. The third one comes as a surprise and the secretary/editor has not received any prior notice of the passing of **GEORGE J. CARTER**, Headquarters from Cream Ridge, NJ.

GEORGE had been quite ill at last report. It is fortunate that his diary of the voyage of the Queen Mary was carried in our Newsletter while he could still appreciate this. If this report is true, he will be missed very much. God Bless.

MICHAEL CLARINGBOULD has three books in print. Although these have been cited in the Newsletter in the past, a repeat announcement is in order. The secretary/editor has two blurbs on these and the costs are somewhat different on each slinger, so he will use the higher cost where applicable. *HELLUVA PELICAN* costs \$22.40 for the first copy and \$17.50 per additional copy. This book does not include anything about the 43rd BG. *BLACK SUNDAY*, a book mentioned by **BOB ROTH** earlier in this Newsletter, costs \$26.65 per copy with additional books at \$21.00 per copy. *THE FORGOTTEN FIFTH* sells for \$34.20 per copy with each additional copy costing \$25.06. Books should be ordered directly from Michael. **MICHAEL CLARINGBOULD, BOX 5136 KINGSTON, ACT 2604, AUSTRALIA**. Make checks out to him in person. You may order by e-mail with payment on delivery. <mjc@albury.net.au>. The author will autograph books as requested. Prices include all taxes, bank charges and delivery.

The notices of our reunion in the various veterans' magazines and on the Internet have resulted in at least two requests for information. One says that he did serve in the 43rd during WW II. The second did not indicate whether or not he was in the 43rd, but the odds are good that he did.

BILL has sent information and a Newsletter to **RAY RUNGE** of 503 Harvard Drive, Glenwood Springs, CO 81601. [The secretary/editor sent such material to a **RAYMOND RUNAGE** on May 3rd, but everything was returned stamped "NO SUCH STREET."]

The secretary has done likewise for **DAVID T. LANE** of 118 Quail Run, Spicewood, TX 78669 after he contacted our reunion chairman, **JAMES THOMPSON**, 63rd Air Mechanic from Tucson, AZ.

If any of you know these men, please contact them and encourage them to join our association.

MARSHALL E. NELSON, 64th Pilot and Squadron Director from El Paso, TX, wants to clear up the question of his duty while in the 43rd. It was that of pilot. He cites that his radio operator was **JAMES E. NOREM** who upon his return to the States went through flight training and eventually became a B-47 pilot.

MARSHALL says that he was also the S-4 officer responsible for quartermaster supplies, tech supply and aircraft maintenance. Despite the heavy work schedule with those duties he did fly his regular rotation of missions with his crew.

He writes that his wife, **BILLYE**, and **JIM**'s wife have lower back problems that will make it impossible for either to attend the Tucson reunion. **BILLYE** may undergo back surgery in October. **JIM** has had heart bypass surgery and has some problems walking. **MARSHALL** had a bout with lung blood clots and was released from the hospital in August. He writes, "This growing old is the pits. A lot of parts don't work anymore and those that do ache." Many of us will agree with that.

CHARLES FARHA, Headquarters Intelligence, requests very nicely that the staff get his mailing label corrected, as it does not reflect his dues paid through 2000. The editor has identified him as being in Intelligence in Headquarters Sqd. in one edition of the Newsletter, but as a Radio Operator in an-

other. [Hopefully both matters now have been corrected.] He thanks the staff in advance for taking care of these minor "infractions."

He and **INGRID** are headed to Montreal, Ontario, Canada early in September to spend time visiting relatives.

After reading the July Newsletter, **ERNEST J. WELLS**, 403rd Pilot from Harrisonburg, VA, wrote that he agreed with Pres. **SAM COMMON**'s comments that there is a tendency of those in the association with e-mail capabilities to propose ideas and ask for backup from other members which in turn usurps the responsibilities of the Board of Directors.

He has mailed the association a check, via **BILL**, to be used towards the 43rd Internet Fund. **ERNIE** has doubts that we will ever see the history **LARRY HICKEY** promised us so many years ago. He feels that **TRACY TUCCIARONE**, Associate member from Indianapolis, IN, and the "Sweetheart of the 43rd," is doing a magnificent job with the web site she has created for the 43rd. He feels that this is will be our only historical document so it should be kept viable, and thus has made one of the first contributions to the association for this purpose.

LEROY JASMER, 63rd Maintenance from Willmar, MN, vents some strong feelings with regard to what action we should take to pursue the task of getting **LARRY HICKEY** to publish our book soon or surrender all photos and other documents provided to him for the purpose of publishing our history.

He feels that these materials are the rightful property of the 43rd Bomb Group Association and that they should be returned after some 11 years along with the money deposited in good faith for the purchase of the book by so many members years ago. **LEROY** suggests that we need a "sharp" lawyer to pursue our cause as well as negative publicity in the Boulder area to help us regain what he believes is rightfully the property of the association.

[In reply to your question, **LEROY**, the editor's information is that the association does not have a written contract with **LARRY** but rather has an oral agreement.]

Your payment of dues through 2000 has been duly recorded.

Another paying his dues through 2000 is **FLOYD REDDING**, 63rd Pilot from N. Ft. Meyers, FL. He reports that he is suffering from emphysema and finds his travel is very restricted. His last reunion was in San Antonio. He cannot make the Tucson reunion. He did get to Tucson in '94 and visited the Pima Air Museum. There he found the "Skunk Works" plane on which he worked while at Wright Field in Dayton, OH, where he was "... responsible for developing the Full Pressure Suit, Ejection Seat and Parachute for the plane. This system was used in the latest model of the U-2." [Which of the aircraft created at the Skunk Works is the one to which you refer, **FLOYD**?]

FLOYD hopes to get his copy of our history while he is still alive. [PLEASE NOTE THIS **LARRY**.]

More sad news has arrived from **SUSAN CASEY SHOBE**. She reports the passing of her father, **STAN CASEY**, 63rd Pilot from Salado, TX, on July 21, 1999. Her mother, **BONITA**, passed away in 1997.

SUSAN writes, "Daddy loved getting the newsletter and he and mother enjoyed the reunions they attended." God Bless.

RICHARD C. HEMPHILL, 65th Radio Operator from Duncan, SC, found that the July 1999 Newsletter "...aroused my aged and fading memories of 'Stryne,' New Guinea and the Philippine years." Of particular interest was the story from **LEW DAWS**, 65th AC Maintenance from Rialto, CA, on page 14 when he reported a B-17 landing at Dobodura was followed in by a Jap plane. **DICK** believes that he was the radio operator on that B-17 or else he has similar story to relate.

They had been a part of the 65th's 9-plane raid on Rabaul that day. The leader of their flight element was Capt. **RUSICK**, and 1st Lt. **STRAUSER** was pilot of Dick's plane. On the return flight their plane became detached from the others and frankly they were lost. "Lt. **STRAUSER** ordered me to contact headquarters for directions and instructions. I could hear Headquarters sending messages but each of the several times I tried to make contact, they would shut down. I could not explain this to the pilot but as we neared the strip Lt. **STRAUSER** made contact by his voice transmitter. As we approached the dark strip the lights came on and were quickly turned off as we made our approach and we landed in the darkness. Of course, we the crew, didn't know what was going on and just as we touched down all four engines were cut and brakes slammed on. **BILL RITENOUR** came rushing through the bomb bay yelling 'Every[one] out. Hit the bushes!' We of course did not hesitate to comply. As things settled down we learned that the Jap had been following us for at least an hour. And as **LOU** said, the Jap turned away and disappeared."

The crew of this flight consisted of Pilot Lt. **STRAUSER** of Texas, three Second Lieutenants whose names **DICK** does not recall. The Bombardier had been a peacetime resident of Havana where his family was in business. The Flight Engineer was **RITENOUR** [**ARTHUR BILL** from Harrisonburg, VA?]. The Ball Turret Gunner was **SWANSON**, the Tail Gunner was **JIM WILSON**, the Side Gunners were **BARTLETT** and **ROY SCHOOLEY** and the Radio Operator was **DICK**. **SCHOOLEY** was a temporary crewmember assigned as Photographer who took **DICK**'s place on side gun. **DICK** hopes that his memory is good enough that **LEW** will agree that this is the same incident.

DICK says that **LEW** mentioned **JOSHUA BARNES** in his article, and he wondered if **JOSHUA** later made C.O. of the 65th? [The listing of Squadron C.O.s on the 43rd web site does not show any **BARNES**.]

DICK also refers to the article on pages 19-20 about **JAY ZEAMER**. [65th Pilot from Bonita Springs, FL and Medal of Honor recipient.] Probing into his foggy memory, **DICK** believes that **JAY**'s plane was specially armed with twin 50s in each side window, two or more 50s mounted to each side of the fuselage below the pilot and copilot and fired by the pilot or navigator. He says, "There may have been extra guns in the nose and in the mount over the bomb bay on a track that pulled out into the radio compartment. The top hatch had to be pulled down and the gun or guns pulled out, a rather clumsy operation to perform in flight."

He was disappointed that the story did not mention the 19-year old tail gunner and his award for the mission.

Dick says that his combat time was short due to a hospital stay and a difficult time recovering from surgery. He did fly several missions with Capt. **JAMES L. HARCROW**, 65th Plot from Ft. Walton Beach, FL, and Lt. **STRAUSER**. **DICK** was one of the many men to transfer from the 19th Bomb Group into the 43rd when the 19th was sent home. Many of the crews were made up from "remnants" left by the 19th. The 65th had been stuck in Sydney without planes. The crews had not trained together and men were shifted from one assignment to another, as circumstances demanded. He writes that ground personnel often volunteered for missions. He recalls one cook who voluntarily went on a mission to Rabaul and took along a bag of garbage that he dropped on the Rabaul strip.

He says that Lt. **STRAUSER**'s crew may have had the lowest rank of any B-17 crew to fly combat. They had one 1st Lt., three 2nd Lts., one corporal, two PFCs and three buck privates. **Dick** says that at 29 he was the oldest in his crew and one of the oldest of any other crewmen. In time, these crews were replaced by well-trained crews arriving from the States. These crewmen were all quite young in their teens or early twenties. He remembers one Hot Shot pilot, who at 19 was a veteran combat captain although he can't recall the name.

Dick says that he has attended many reunions and would not remember many or be remembered by many others with the exception of Doc **MILTON GUSACK**, 65th Flight Surgeon from Chevy Chase, MD, who he says anyone who knew Doc will not forget him.

[Dick the secretary/editor has no further news on ALTON "DOUG" LEAMAN, 403rd Tail Gunner from Indianapolis, IN.]

RICHARD E. "WILLIE" WILLIAMS, 403rd Tail Gunner from Rapid City, SD, sends word that he was talking to the wife of **JOHN GALLITSCH** in late August and learned that JOHN had died on the 3rd of the month. JOHN was Navigator on the same crew with WILLIE. God Bless.

JOHN is set for the reunion and says he will be the only one there from his crew, but there will be others there who he has met over the years.

After finding our web site on the Internet, **KATHRYN BEAMAN WAGAMON**, contacted the secretary in an attempt to find out what any of us could tell her about her late father, **DENNIS C. BEAMAN**. Although she is not positive, she believes her father was in the 64th Squadron 43rd Bomb Group at some time during WW II. KATHRYN writes that she has photos of him and she believes that a photo she saw on the web site was of one man also shown in one of her dad's photos. DENNIS had told her that he had flown over Japan in a B-24 two or three days after the second atomic bomb had been dropped. DENNIS was not on flying status. He was very active earlier in the war in setting up new air bases in the states. He had photos of the Japanese peace delegation arriving at Ie Shima. He also had in his possession a piece of silk with the 64th Insignia, an Indian riding a bomb, embroidered on it.

Upon the advice of the secretary, KATHRYN has posted a notice on our web site and has mailed copies of photos to **TRACY TUCCIARONE**, Associate member and 43rd web master, to be posted on the site. Any one, who recognizes or remembers DENNIS, please contact KATHRYN. Her e-mail address is <katspawn@firstnetva.com>. Her snail mail address is 79 Maple Tree Lane, Barboursville, VA 22923.

Our Vice President, **MAX M. AXELSEN**, 403rd Pilot from San Antonio, TX, mailed the editor the August 1999 issue of *American Air Museum News*, the Official Newsletter of *The American Air Museum in Britain Campaign*. The lead article is devoted to a story about the arrival in England of the B-24 which had been on static show at Lackland AFB in San Antonio. The story relates how the plane was disassembled and shipped from Lackland in a C-130 Hercules and a C-5 Galaxy to RAF Mildenhall in England, where it is now stored in a hanger. The long process of restoring the plane has just begun.

MAX also enclosed a couple of Polaroid photos of a replica B-24 being assembled at Lackland to replace the real McCoy. This replica was fabricated in Ontario, CA, and should be completely assembled at the Lackland parade ground by the end of September 1999.

LLOYD "BREEZY" BOREN, 65th Bombardier and past secretary/treasurer of this association, forwarded to this secretary/editor the September newsletter of the 24 Squadron R.A.A.F. Association. The 24 Squadron has a lengthy article on "THE PHOSPHORUS BOMB." In our July Newsletter a request was made for anyone experiencing the Japanese using this bomb in WW II, to contact the 24 Squadron about it. They had not heard anything at the time their newsletter went to press, but apparently this was something that lone R.A.A.F. planes encountered with some frequency during the early part of the war.

LLOYD also sent along a copy of the brief history of the 43rd that our founder and a past president, **ROBERT H. BUTLER**, 63rd Bombardier from Fayetteville, NC, has written and read at the past dedications of our memorial plaque at various air bases. This will be produced near the end of this Newsletter as well as being forwarding to TRACY to appear on the web site.

Our President, SAM COMMONS, mailed a copy of the July Newsletter to **JAMES F. MARTIN, Jr.**, 63rd Intelligence from San Jose, CA, when JIM reported not receiving his. In a thank you letter to SAM, JIM acknowledged that he did receive his copy sometime later and sent it on to a Floridian friend. His friend had been a fighter pilot in Europe during WW II, and JIM wanted to show his friend what a good newsletter our association had. JIM also says he enjoyed reading our newsletter.

JIM says that he regrets that heart problems will keep him from attending the Tucson reunion.

He recalls seeing the names of the late **KEN McCULLAR**, 63rd CO and Pilot, and **HARRY A. STALEY**, 63rd Pilot from Batavia, NY. JIM writes that he recalls KEN's crash at Port Moresby that killed all of the crew in that B-17. He says that he had been told that HARRY was "... a really good pilot. Sorry to hear that he is gone."

JIM told SAM that he recalls being in Flourtown, PA, during the 1930s where he visited a friend and attended a small circus that came to Flourtown each year. Jim says that he lived in nearby Germantown from 1928 to 1941 when he joined the Army. He has fond memories of those days and thinks of them more often as he gets older. He writes, "82 does this to you!"

JIM writes that SAM has done an excellent job as president and he would vote for SAM anytime. He hopes there might be a happy ending to the story of **LARRY HICKEY**, Associate and author from Boulder, CO, but he has doubts about what LARRY tells us.

GEORGE STAHL, 403rd Flight Engineer from Mechanicsburg, PA, writes that this is his first letter to our Association since he had become a member several years ago. He has had to forego attending the reunions due to the cost. He chose to write to alert any of you who may possibly qualify for the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Allotments through the V.A. At the V.A. clinic where he purchases his high blood pressure medicine, he was asked if he was ever in combat. When he responded in the positive, they wanted to know if he ever had nightmares due to this service or depression, anti-social behavior, etc. He was given an interview with a counselor and was advised to apply for the aforementioned allotment. Since GEORGE has suffered from such symptoms ever since the war, he was given at 10% disability.

He wrote that most vets receiving this allotment are Vietnam vets. He was amazed to read in a documented, verified report that hundreds of "Nam" vets were fraudulently receiving this benefit. Some of those receiving this benefit were not in combat duty and others had not even served in the military. It seems that the V.A. did not bother to check the records of these persons; something GEORGE finds hard to believe. "It is an inexcusable act of denigrating we combat vets, comprising 5-10% of all veterans that served."

He says that any of you who might wish to contact him, he can be reached by phone: 717-691-0406.

GEORGE included a poem, a letter he wrote to a newspaper in response to another's letter as well as a composition he wrote on posttraumatic Stress.

After a mission to the Balikpapan oil fields he composed the following:

THE EYES OF DEATH

In the battered guts of a "liberator:
I heard a brother cry
In the bloody skies of New Guinea
I helped a war child die
The eyes of death
Are imploring
They pierce, they linger
They accept no lies

There is a good deal of food for thought in his perceptive letter that follows.

Mark Miller's letter (June 10) defending today as better times in contrast to our past degrading periods of history is but a sad commentary on man's devolution since emerging from the primates.

Most glaring is that no other species on this planet violates the biological balance as does mankind. For all of our "so-called" intelligence, we blatantly continue to destroy nature's life-giving environment, assuming in our arrogance that we alone have the God-given right to control her worldwide cobweb of coexistence, interlinking zillions upon zillions of living entities, each depending on the other for survival.

Man in comparison is but a grain of sand in our vast cosmos. Yet, he endlessly goes on killing, even exterminating his own kind in mindless wars, the epitome of his stupidity.

Behind our 20th-century façade of sophisticated civility there lurks an inner being of cold, heartless selfism. Like computerized robots, we methodically continue our downward trend, completely oblivious to the songs our mothers sang to us. Of love, of compassion, of true bothered.

And "The meek shall inherit the earth." Would that I could believe that.

George, who has become an anti-war activist, wrote the following. [What war has done to one man, it surely has done to many others.]

POST TRAUMATIC STRESS A Monkey rides My Shoulder

When I was flying combat missions in the south Pacific in a B-24 Bomber, I was never alone. A monkey rode my shoulder, needling me constantly, that monkey of Death.

He was there when I nervously sweated out a pre-dawn take-off, remembering the screams of fellow crewmembers as they crashed on the strip and burned alive. He is close by as we fly en route to our target, a thousand miles distant over endless, enemy, shark-infested waters, reminding me that if we have to ditch or bail out, death is a certainty.

When "Tokyo Rose" broke the silence of our radio by saying "You Yankees will all die," then [she] named the pilots of our flight group; my monkey grinned demonically.

He is frenzied with ecstasy when we bomb our targets and the sky erupts black with heavy flak while enemy fighters come at you from every direction. He howls with glee as a "Zero" zooms down demolishing our nose turret and its gunner while I, firing from my top turret position send him seaward in a smoking spiral. As the fighters swarm in to finish off our three crippled ships and our remaining guns froze tight from constant firing, he is in his glory. When the attackers turned tail for home, he grew enraged.

That monkey hassled me for the rest of my tour of duty. When discharged home, I thought "Good riddance," but he had other plans. Now a free loader, he is always riding my shoulder, torturing my dreams, forcing me to recall that which I want desperately to forget. The years go by and he keeps nagging. Stress, I thought I could overcome with time. Not so, it never leaves me. Now, I only want to be alone. To shut myself off from society, to never trust anyone, my sole companion, that patiently waiting monkey who wants me for himself to haunt me to my grave.

On a lighter note comes a letter from **EDWARD A. DALY**, 65th Bombardier from Ormond Beach, FL. ED cites the fact that he flew 51 missions on the crew of **ANDY BUROCHONOCK**, 65th Pilot from Stamford, CT.

It seems that ED has had great enjoyment in taking a bag of balls and two clubs and playing golf on the sandy beach as if it were an 18-hole golf course. But better yet, here is one for all you golfers.

On Thursday, September 2, 1999, Jim Beerer, Bob Sherry and Ed teed off at 10 AM at Oceanside Country Club. Their wives played in the threesome behind them. It was a time when the greens had just been aerated and sanded and were difficult to read. At the par 3 fourth hole of about 110 yards over water, Ed selected his Powersole chipper and saw the ball hit the pin. Ed remarked, "I think it went over the green." They drove up to the green and Bob got out of the cart and walked across the green while Ed drove behind the green but could not find his ball. Bob looked and cried "Ed, your ball is in the cup." Ed says that this was his first hole-in-one in 63 years of playing golf. He says that since retiring 13 years ago he probably has played 1500 rounds of golf at the Oceanside CC. Ed and the guys were excited and started yelling. The wives across the water hazard, where they were about to tee up, were also yelling and happy. Ed says, "What a great feeling." Not bad for a 78 year old golfer!

At the 9th hole, before the turn, Ed picked up the phone and called the grill and ordered a glass of white Zinfandel for himself to be waiting when he finished his round. He announced his hole-in-one. When they arrived at the clubhouse, everyone in the grille was cheering and clapping and Ryan Adams bought Ed a glass of wine.

Since Ed belongs to the Hole-In-One Club at the CC, he won \$214. He had won \$45 dollars in May. He pays \$1 a month for membership in the Hole-In-One Club. [Did you buy a lottery ticket that day ED?]

He and LILLIAN celebrated his achievement that evening at the Halifax Yacht Club with some old Oakmont friends, George and Jo Cox, who had just returned from a trip north. They reminisced about old pals from Oakmont.

Ed writes that all is okay with the two of them. They are going to visit Patty in St. Louis for Christmas, but will be back in Florida by the New Year.

Another son of one of our buddies in arms is seeking information regarding his late father. **ED BRABANT Jr.** writes in e-mail, "My father **ED BRABANT** flew B-24 Liberators. I remember his saying that he flew with Kens Men. Two years ago he passed away. Is there any way that I might get any information on the missions he may have flown or the decorations he got? He was a staff sergeant nose gunner. Any information would be greatly appreciated."

One can't help but wonder why so many vets did not talk with their children about their war experiences? There are countless children wanting to learn about their dads' war experiences after their dads are gone. Again, anyone of you who can help ED Jr. with information about his dad, your help would be appreciated. The only address we have is for e-mail.

<**JIGANDPIG@MEDIAONE.NET**>.

The following brief history was written by **ROBERT H. BUTLER**, Col. USAF (Ret), 63rd Squadron, 511 Forest Lake Rd., Fayetteville, NC 28305, at all of the dedications of the plaques and memorials by the 43rd Bomb Group Association. BOB served in the B-17 era of our history. He is the founder of and a past president of our Association.

August 30, 1999

43RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP-WING

From the 20th day of November, 1940, when the 43rd Bomb Group was constituted, until the deactivation on Guam in 1990, where the 43rd served as the 43rd Strategic Wing, the 43rd has established a proud history in the United States Air Force. In pre-war days, flying B-18's and evolving through the years to the B-52, thousands of air personnel, who worked together on the ground and in the air, can look back with pride, as we do, on the 43rd's record of achievement.

The group was activated at Langley Field, Virginia, on January 15, 1941, from elements of the 2nd Bomb Group, the birthplace for the implementation of the B-17. In August 1941, the group moved to

Bangor, Maine for further training; comprised of Hdqrs., 63rd, 64th, and 65th Squadrons. It was joined in April 1942, after moving overseas, by the 403rd Bombardment Squadron, formerly the 13th Recon. Squadron.

After the outbreak of World War II, the group engaged in anti-submarine patrols on the Atlantic Coast until in February 1942 [when] it was moved to Boston for transport on the Queen Mary, with other troops, on a 40 day solo voyage across the Atlantic and Indian Oceans to Sydney, Australia, arriving in Australia on 28 March. Early elements of the 403rd Squadron had already arrived in Australia on the Argentina.

After moving to the Brisbane area and further combat training at air bases in northern Australia at Torrens Creek, Charters Towers, Iron Range and finally settling in Mareeba, west of Townsville. Early combat missions were performed with the 19th Bomb Group until they returned to the States. This left the 43rd as the sole heavy bombardment unit in the Southwest Pacific Area charged with the protection of Australia which was already under attack by Japanese forces moving from a large portion of New Guinea which they had already captured. Australia was highly vulnerable since practically all of its military forces had been committed to the war in North Africa. The only long-range bomber available and capable of holding the enemy at bay was the B-17 "Flying Fortress." The B-17s were E and F models, and as they were lost, what was left was used for parts to keep the Group flying. Most missions were flown individually due to the shortage of planes. Despite this, the Japanese were not only held back, but pushed back, and before the B-17 was replaced by the B-24, air superiority had been won in the Southwest Pacific Area.

There was never a B-17G with the nose turret in combat in the Pacific theatre. General Whitehead who had the B-17F "The Old Man" converted to his personal plane, after the battles, eventually sent his crew back to the States to pick up a B-17G to replace the "F" model, and this was also named "The Old Man." "The Old Man" had a proud history; however, the Japanese learned early on to attack the B-17 straight at the nose which had weak fire power. This led to the B-17G nose turret which was confined to the European Theatre.

The 43rd Bomb Group, not an established unit, continued to operate from Australia, New Guinea and Owi Island from August 1942 until November 1944 with numerous attacks on Japanese shipping in the Netherlands East Indies and Bismarck Archipelago, experiments with low level and skip bombing tactics for effective results. There were also many missions on enemy airfields and installations and tactical support of ground troops in the area of Buna and Sanananda Point. These actions were culminated in early March 1943 by participation in the complete victory over a large Japanese convoy in the Bismarck Sea, a unified effort of all 5th Air Force units and those of the Royal Australian Air Force, along with 5 PT boats of the United States Navy. Other major targets during this period included Rabaul Harbor and surrounding airfields, Lae, Salamau, Wewak, Gasmata and Kavieng.

Until later in the summer of 1943, most of the 43rd missions were executed in the B-17 models "E" and "F." Then a transition was made into the B-24 Liberator, supplemented by 12 radar equipped B-24s for special missions. This latter innovation was known as the "Scott Project." The group moved from Jackson strip at Port Moresby to Dobodura on the north coast of New Guinea in December 1943, and in later months to Nadzab and to Owi Island in July 1944. Constantly on the move, the group continued Northward to Tacloban and Mindoro in the Philippines and within four months began flying missions from Ie Shima in the Ryuku Islands. The 43rd Group pioneered skip bombing and radar bombing.

Official battle honors are:

Anti-submarine
New Guinea
Western Pacific
Luzon

China Defensive
Papua
Bismarck Archipelago
Leyte

China Offense
Ryukus
Northern Solomons
Air Offensive Japan

Three Presidential Unit Citations were awarded, first for New Guinea and later for the Bismarck Sea Battle and the Philippines. Among many other individual decorations and awards for valor, was the award of the Medal of Honor to Major Jay Zeamer, Jr. and the same award, posthumously, to Lt. Joseph H. Sarnoski, his bombardier, for heroic action on a voluntary lone recon mission over Buka, in the Solomon Islands on 16 June 1943. That day, this crew, on that mission, became the most decorated crew in the history of the United States Air Force, and remains so today. A feat that is unlikely to ever be equaled. Two Medal of Honors, seven Distinguished Flying Crosses, Air Medals and other commendations. Jay Zeamer and his co-pilot, J. T. Britton, are still with us today, part of that nine-man crew from the 65th Squadron.

From its inception in 1940 till the end of WW II in 1945, Commanding Officers were:

Lt. Col. Harold D. Smith
Lt. Col. Francis B. Valentine
Major Conrad H. Diehl, Jr.
Col. Roger M. Ramey
Lt. Col. John a. Roberts
Col. Harry J. Hawthorne
Lt. Col. Edward W. Scott, Jr.
Col. James T. Pettus, Jr. (Last WW II C/O and only living WW II C/O)

The group was inactivated at McKinley Field at Luzon on 29 April 1946, but after returning to the States was reactivated at Davis-Monthan Field in Arizona. With the advent of the Strategic Air Command, the 43rd Wing continued to serve under its former 5th Air Force Commander, General George C. Kenney, Jr.

The 43rd Strategic Wing continued to distinguish itself in peace and war until its deactivation on Guam in 1990, prior to which, they were allowed to change their name to 43rd Bombardment Wing. The Group and Wing official patch has always remained the same, a bomb over seas. The only WW II remaining squadron in the Wing was the 65th Strategic Squadron, and their patch was B-52s flying over seas and palm trees. They voted on deactivation to change the patch to the last WW II 65th patch, the "Lucky Dice." The 43rd Wing pioneered in-air refueling and made the first round-the-world non-stop flight between 26 February and 2 March 1949, in a B-50 known as "Lucky Lady II." Inscribed in her nose was the legend "Ken's Men" and "43rd Bomb Group." The nose of this plane is in the "Planes of Fame" Museum in California, and along side it is a plaque from the 43rd Group Association. We have similar plaques placed at the Air Force Academy, Bangor Airport, Langley Air Force Base, Mareeba (Queensland, Australia), and a Memorial Bench at the Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio. Col. J. B. Hall was the last C/O on Guam (B-52s) of the 43rd Wing.

[It should also be noted that the 43rd has been reactivated as a transport and tanker outfit and is stationed at Pope AFB near Bob's hometown of Fayetteville. Perhaps some of you would like to enhance this fine history of the 43rd by filling in a bit of the B-24 era, especially its missions from Clark Field on Luzon, Philippines, and the missions against Japan itself before the Japanese surrendered.]

EILEEN GOODWIN, Associate member and widow of **ROBERT**, 64th Bombsight Mechanic, from Kewanee, IL, has sent a check for her 2000-year dues. She expresses regrets that she will not be able to attend the Tucson reunion as she had hoped. Her son **MARK**, who had hoped to accompany her to the reunion is having health problems and can't make that long a trip. Another son, **THOM**, who also had planned to accompany his mother to the reunion has recently started a new job and will not be able to take the time off for the trip. So **EILEEN** says for everyone to have fun and have some fun for her too.

EMANUEL A. LaPORTE is attempting to locate anyone who knew his uncle, 1st Lt. **MICHAEL LaPORTE** a 65th B-17 Pilot. **MICHAEL** and crew were lost on a mission to Cape Gloucester, New Britain on Sept. 2, 1943. They flew out of Jackson Strip, Port Moresby, New Guinea. His plane was last seen heading in the direction of Mt. Talawe. There were many Jap fighters in the air at the time. The crew was officially listed as MIA, but some 6 years later all were declared officially dead.

MANNY is seeking other pilots and crewmen who might have known his uncle. He wonders if anyone has a photo of his uncle, his plane and/or his crew. He has gathered a great deal of material on this mission and the crew as well as on the 43rd Bomb Group and 65th Squadron. All of this will be in the memorabilia room at the Tucson reunion.

The rest of the crew are: 2nd Lt. **HOWARD L. MUNSON**, Copilot; 2nd Lt. **WILLIAM H. VANDERGRIFF**, Navigator; **GORDON R. SPOOR**, Bombardier; T/Sgt. **IDRIS T. JENKINS**, Engineer; S/Sgt. **TURE LINDSTROM**, Asst. Engineer; T/Sgt. **ALVIN B. ROWE**, Radio Operator; **ORVILLE R. SEVERSON**, Asst. Radio Operator; S/Sgt. **ROBERT J. FRANKENBERGER**, Gunner and S/Sgt. **FRANCIS W. NEVILLE**, Gunner.

Manny's addresses are: 443 Bear Ridge Road, Pleasantville, NY 10570 and e-mail <Seabee1@erols.com>.

Thinking about joining our association is **RAY EMAMUELSON**, 403rd Sqd. His address is 2136 Windward Shore Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23451. He has been mailed an application and a copy of the July Newsletter. If you know **RAY**, why not contact him and encourage him to join us. His e-mail address is <honray@axis.net> and his phone is 757-481-0811.

DIARY OF COBER'S CREW FROM TIME OF OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENT UNTIL RETURN 28 AUGUST 1944

I had my instrument check 28 August 1943 at Topeka, Kansas. Our crew was assigned a pink B-24 for Africa but it didn't check out, so we were then assigned a plane scheduled for New Guinea (plane 42-72801) and we did calibration checks 5 September 1943.

Sep. 6, 1943 We left Topeka, KA, and flew to San Francisco. We left Hamilton after dark on Sep. 10 and landed at Hickam Field, Hawaii and rested a day before proceeding. Sep. 12 we left Hawaii and flew to Christmas Island. They had just had a fuel fire which burned over quite an area. Next day, the 13th, we flew to Penrhyn and on to Aitutaki [Cook Islands] Island on the 14th. We went so far south to avoid the naval preparation for Gilbert Island invasion. From Aitutaki to Esperitu Santos [New Hebrides] on the 15th, to New Caledonia on 16th to Amberley Field in Brisbane, Australia on the 16th. We flew to Townsville on the 17th and left our plane there for modification. The Sperry ball turret was removed and replaced with two flexible 50 caliber guns and an Emerson nose turret was installed.

Our crew was flown to Port Moresby by a C-47 on 20 Sep. 1943 and landed during a Jap air raid. Three fast rounds from a nearby 90mm AA and everybody disappeared leaving our crew standing around the C-47. Someone yelled for us to drop our ** baggage and take cover which we did when the fact of an air raid finally sank in.

We were assigned to the 403rd Squadron of the 43rd Bomb Group of the Fifth Air Force.

The crew's four officers shared a tent on the side of a hill at seven-mile strip. [The enlisted men] inherited the tent from a crew who didn't come back from a mission several weeks before.

- Sep. 22 Today we went on our first mission over Cape Gloucester with the operations officer as pilot, there were no Jap planes but as we made our bomb run over the runway, the Ack Ack bounced our plane a little and I finally felt how it is to be shot at. I also suddenly felt I was now earning my flight pay.
- Sep. 26 The 403rd is the 43rd group recco squadron in addition to being a regular bomb squadron. We went on our first recco today up past the Admiralties "Manus" to 3° N east just south of Truck, toward Rabaul and back to Moresby. That makes a real long day. Take off at first light and landing at dusk. The second leg of the recco covers the main re-supply route for Truck and the Rabaul areas.
- Sep. 28 We had our first look at Wewak, the Jap main base on the north side of New Guinea. We bombed the runway and had our first experience of 90mm heavy Ack Ack.
- Oct. 1-3 At a squadron meeting our CO, Major Welch, discussed our sloppy formation flying and our poor gunnery so we spent several days practicing.
- Oct. 12 I can see why we had formation and gunnery practice last week. Today we had a maximum effort strike on shipping in Simpson Harbor "Rabaul," and I have never seen a whole Bomb Group in such a tight formation, necessary for good bombing and for concentration of our defensive firepower. I still don't know why the Japs had that concentration of shipping, both freighters and warships, in the harbor at one time. There must have been about 120 B-24s over the target. The Ack Ack was heavy but all of our squadron made it back. Many ships were hit and sunk. We had good P-38 cover; they kept the Zeros busy.
- Oct. 10-19 This is the second time we had bad weather over New Britain on the way to bomb Rabaul. On the 13th we had bombed out alternate target, Cape Gloucester, but today we ran into a snow storm at 16,000' (which is about the freeze altitude here near the equator) and I moved into wingtip to wingtip position on my flight leader but even so a heavy gust of snow caused a white out and the whole squadron broke up and we returned to base individually.
- Nov. 5 Bombed Rabaul (town) hitting supplies. I was flying second element right wing when the right wing plane in the first element was hit by AA and it tore the entire right aileron loose just as we dropped our bombs. The aileron swung back and forth, being still attached to the plane by the in board end, and the damaged plane slowed down so fast our props nearly chewed his wing off before I could yank back on the wheel and hit right rudder.

Thank goodness we had dropped our bombs or our plane would have been too heavy to respond so well.

Nov. 10 Bombed Rabaul "Lakunai" airstrip tonight (individual planes), after photos showed the Japs just brought in about 100 new planes. Bombed at 12,000'. As I came out of the clouds over the air strip, the search lights and AA guns concentrated right on us, so I made a tight 360° and by that time they were working over another B-24 500 feet below and half a mile ahead. We finished our bomb run just as the lights came back to us. The other plane was hit and didn't make it back.

We used 40 fragment bomb clusters (3 to a cluster) for maximum coverage when bombing planes disbursed around an airstrip such as Lakunai. The danger with the frag clusters is that they are armed as they leave the plane. When the strap holding them together comes off they are individual bombs. If they touch each other "bang." Two of the bombs must have touched under our Operations Officer's plane for it came back looking like a sieve.

On this mission we flew from Moresby to a dirt strip at Dobodura in the afternoon and took off about midnight to bomb Rabaul. The dirt runway wasn't too solid on the take-off. I was off to the right side for the runway and when I applied full throttle, it led off to the right. I thought I could correct with left rudder, but by that time I had "taken out" about 4 runway marker lights on the right side and had to cut power on both left engines to get back onto the center of the runway. That wasn't the way to start a night mission from a strange field.

Nov. 18 We have good softball games; officers vs. enlisted men. However, the enlisted men win 2 out of 3 times.

Caught a cold a couple of days ago and as I was coming back from the mess hall today the Flight Surgeon took one look at me and invited me into the dispensary. He stuck a thermometer in my mouth and then informed me I was grounded, but really I was already feeling better.

Nov. 20 Our crew was to fly to Dobo[dura] this afternoon so we could take off at daylight to fly the Bismarck Sea recco. Thunderheads had been building up as they often do by mid-afternoon. I had been flying between thunderheads winding my way where it seemed less dense. Then about half way over the Owen Stanley Mts., flying at 18,000', the little clear place between the two towering cumuli came to an end and we flew into one inky black cloud. First the updraft caught us and the rate of climb went to the end of the scale, 5,000 feet/minute up, and I had the wheel all the way forward. Then we hit the down draft and the reverse happened; the wheel all the way back and we were diving off the scale and the air speed was past the red line. During this two to three minute event I finally managed to do a 180° turn and the thunderhead threw us out at about 12,000'. A Navy Lieutenant had hitched a ride to Dobo with us and he didn't have his chute on when we hit the up draft. Tark, my engineer, had his on and by the time we hit the down draft Tark was trying to pull the Lt. off the ceiling to get him into his chute. That is the hard way to get negative gravity. I was told that Pedro Maldonado (tail gunner) in the back of the plane was thrown out the window but caught hold of the gun mount and was pulled back into the plane. We returned to Port Moresby and got up early the next morning and flew the Bismarck Sea recco.

Dec. 2 Every time we move it takes about ten days for our mail to start catching up to us. The reading material is quite limited. The days I don't fly I go down to intelligence and read the results of our yesterday's mission and then the worldwide war summary. I have read most of the Officers Club's library offerings except the set of Harvard Classics. I am nearly through Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*. I had skimmed it as required reading in school.

The E. M. of my crew got a bad break this morning when they were picked for a week's detail of clearing and preparing out next campsite at Dobodura.

Someone in the squadron must have acquired a small goat as a pet, because it came into our tent as we were taking our afternoon nap. We were forced to evict it after (he/she) tried to eat anything in sight.

Last night as I was pulling back my mosquito net to get into bed, a big black widow spider crawled out of a fold, and Jim (James Thomas, copilot) came over with his flashlight to help track her down and dispose of her.

Dec. 5-10 Our squadron is preparing to move from Port Moresby to Dobodura on the eastern side of New Guinea from Moresby. Flew to Townsville for squadron supplies then to Dobo. Flew daily cargo trips from P.M. to Dobo. Moved everything that would fit into the B-24. Loaded the disassembled pre-fab buildings including operations, orderly room, dispensary, mess hall, and supply then finally the tents and the half of the crews.

Dec. 6-25 The four officers of our crew have a very nice tent here at Dobo with a wooden floor requisitioned from a lumber pool that no one was watching. Since there are so many crawling things, we built the floor about four feet off the ground by cutting several trees at the four foot level and planting a couple of posts to fill in. We found 8 poles to act as rafters and stretched the tent over them. We don't need a center pole. We found enough wood and other material to have siding up about 3 feet above the floor. Instead of having side flaps, we stretched the sides of the tent past the plate (the rafters have a 3-foot overhang) and tied the tent ropes to the floor sill. We had several old mosquito nets so we cut them at the seams and we enclosed the 4' area from the wainscoting to the roof plate the tent rests on. We made our screen door and covered it with netting. Now we don't need to sleep under mosquito netting. (The best house in the squadron.)

An old tree threatens our tent, so we tried to pull it to one side as we sawed it down. "I lost my Woodsman's Medal" - the tree crashed through a corner of our tent and we used all of our spare time for a week to make repairs.

Several new crews, "Catlin" and "Perry," reported in to the 403rd so we will be flying a little less since they left their planes at Townsville for modification.

Dec. 8-10 Since we don't have water piped into the squadron area as yet; we go a half-mile down to the river each day to bathe. The river is fairly large (at least 125' across and 3' - 4' deep). The water is fast running and fairly cool for New Guinea. Yesterday a fresh water leech grabbed me while bathing and boy does their bite sting! Today four officers from other crews found some cordite and blasting caps and fuses left by the engineers. On the way to the river they were setting off charges. They used up the cordite but still had 50 or so caps

left and brought them down to the water where I was bathing. A bombardier had taken 20 or 30 caps out of the box and working them around in his left hand aligning them. I saw what they were doing and, having had experience on the farm with the use of blasting caps and dynamite, I strongly cautioned them to quit handling the caps and put them back into the box. They didn't seem inclined to heed my exhortation so I moved about 50' out into the river and was bathing when "BANG!" The caps went off in the bombardier's left hand and took off all the fingers and most of the thumb. All 4 men's upper bodies were bleeding from the fine fragments of the cap casing. It was unbelievable that no one's eyes were punctured. The 3 yelled to me to take care of the bombardier while they ran up the hill to the squadron for help. I grabbed my towel, put on my shoes, used the other towel for a tourniquet, and the two of us started for our area. The last 100 yards was up a steep grade and the ambulance crew met us with a stretcher.

[To be continued.]

***** QUARTERLY HUMOR *****

One day an inquisitive young girl asked her mother how old she was. The mother replied that you never ask a lady her age. Then the lass asked her mother how much did she weigh. Once again the mother told her that was a subject you also did not ask a lady. Finally, in despair the young girl asked her mother why her father had left them. The mother admonished her daughter with the reply that she would never discuss that matter.

One day in school, the young girl mentioned this conversation to a classmate. The classmate said it was simple to get the answers to her questions. Everything was on the mother's driver's license. So the lass sneaked into her mother's purse one day and found out the answers to her questions.

She confronted her mother and said she knew she was 34 years old and weighed 135 pounds. In addition she said she knew why dad had left her mom. "You failed in sex. I saw the 'F' after sex on your driver's license."

A Testing Test

Two students were taking a college chemistry course. They did well on all of their work and each had a solid grade of A going into the final exam.

Having such a good grade made them so cocky that they decided to party with some friends rather than study for the final. They had such a good time they did not get back on campus until early on the morning of the final.

Rather than take the final in their condition, they told the professor that they had been on their way to campus in plenty of time for the final exam, but they had a flat tire en route. They had no spare and had great difficulty getting help, so they asked to take a makeup exam at a later date.

The professor agreed that they could take the test the next day. The students were overjoyed and studied that night, confident that they would keep their good grades.

They were on time at the exam hall and were placed in separate rooms. Each was handed a test booklet and told to begin.

The first problem was quite easy and worth 5 points. Their confidence soared even higher! They completed the problem and turned the page.

It said, "For 95 points, which tire?"

Respectively Submitted – Jim Cherkauer, Editor

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 that you want in the Newsletter, please have it in the editor's hands absolutely no later than the 15th of the month before publication. Please write legibly. Late arriving material will be included in the following Newsletter. Dues (\$15 Per Year or \$100 Life) may be sent directly to BILL WILSON, Treasurer, or to JIM CHERKAUER, Secretary. (Addresses are at the beginning of the Newsletter.) Make the check out to **43rd Bomb Group Assoc.** Check the mailing label on this edition to find out your status with respect to paid up dues. The Association's fiscal year is the same as the calendar year. You may send E-Mail to the Secretary/Editor at <cherrij@buffnet.net>.

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

A little foot note on Jim Cherkauer's remarks on Col. Carl A Hustad. Carl and two others were the 43rd Bomb Group's first Pilots. I'm sure there were others, but I can't recall their names. The other two were our first pilots lost. They were lost at Bangor in B18's on sub patrols off the New England coast due to bad weather. That left Carl. He was a pilot in the 63rd and came home with me in October 1943. He was a special fellow to me - so was his wife Ginny.

Glen D Sellers, 360 58th Street NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87105. Phone number is 505-831-7150. E-mail is dreager@swep.com is looking for information on his uncle Johnny. John F Dreher, SN 35339934, was a Sgt Tail Gunner on a B24 crew that trained at Casper Army Air Field. They were lost in combat. Not much to go, on but if any one can help let him know.

Frank Hassett, Pilot 64th, want to know if Nathan "Joe" Hirsh, Jr. is the Joe he knew a long time ago. Frank the phone number I have for Joe is 512-863-2454. Give him a call, maybe you can get some of those cheap rates they talk about on TV.

Jane H Henning wife of Dick Henning, reports Dick passed away 18th of July 1999. Dick was a Crew Chief in the 64th. They put on the Reunion at Dayton, Ohio. Did a Great Job. We will all miss Dick - God Bless

John and Dorthy Holleran 64th Operations joined the 64th in Bangor and returned to the states late in 1944 from Owl. That boy did his bit (ground crew). They can't make Tucson, but maybe next year. Thanks to all the staff for a great job.

Scott Kirby sends in \$25.00 to help on the 43rd Internet. Thanks Scott. He also says the News letter is great.

Marjorie Lynch, wife of George, reports his passing 17th of July. He had cancer for three years. They had big plans to make the Tucson Reunion. George liked getting the News Letter. God Bless

Jerry and Vell Snyder, 403rd Radio/Oper. sent in their dues. Jerry has Alzheimer's, but still remembers his days in the 403rd. They won't be with us in Tucson, but looking forward to Jim's report on the Reunion.

Arthur Tassoni, 64th, wants to contact Bob Braudean in Bussier City, LA. Bob put on a Reunion in his town in 1987 or 1988. It was a really Big Show. I've lost touch with him. Hope he is well. Let Arthur and me know about Bob.

That's about it for now. Take Care ---- God Bless

Mary Lois and Bill