



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

NEWSLETTER 73rd EDITION
JANUARY 2000



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***** FROM MAX M. AXELSEN, PRESIDENT *****

My thanks and appreciation to both the nominating committee and the Group for accepting me as your president. Having been a career military person, I have been a part of many military organizations. None has meant more to me than my association with the 43rd Bomb Group. Our experiences were in common with most Army Air units of WWII and all of us shared a common bond ... our mission was most just, and God was surely with us in all areas where Americans served.

I sincerely appreciate, as you must, Bob Butler for creating this association back in 1981. We have met in fellowship since that time and shared common experiences, and made new friendships.

This is not an association of aircrews ... it is an association of patriots ... in whatever capacity you served. We could not have accomplished our mission without each other's efforts. The rigors of the ground support people were most difficult. In addition to hard work, long hours, etc., how much Spam, Vienna sausage and freeze-dried eggs can you eat? And the longer you were there ... experiencing insects of all kinds, poor health facilities, infections, etc., ... the greater the hardship. My respect and admiration will always be with these men in all of the support areas. Many of you I will never know, other than through our newsletter, but you have all truly been a part of the "Greatest Generation." Your service was most honorable and you can be justifiably proud to have a part of the 43rd Bomb Group. The 43rd has gone on to a highly creditable heritage ... a big part of which YOU established.

As we move onward, I want to extend my appreciation to Sam Commons, Jim Cherkauer and Bill Wilson for their work on behalf of the Group. What a wonderful trio that has worked so diligently in our interests. They've followed their predecessors in keeping our Group's interests in perspective and unity. I treasure the trusts we have shared and value their friendship and support. To each, a most hearty well done! And to Jim and Bill, my thanks for your staying aboard to assist me to continue in the work that lies ahead.

In turn, Squadron Directors, your representatives, have presented the Board with meaningful input. Thanks to all.

AND, what a pair of performers we have had in the Watson's! We could not find sufficient accolades to express our appreciation for their great work on our reunions. God Bless you, Bob and Irene.

Since this is the first newsletter in our New Year, Margaret and I extend our very best wishes to all. Stay healthy, in love with someone, and cherish each day that we continue to be blessed in this great nation. May God bless you and yours.

Max M. Axelsen

43rd Comrades:

Words cannot express the wonderful emotions that your letters, cards and signatures have given me in this difficult time. Being commanding Officer has certain perks and the position has authority. These do not necessarily include respect, friendship, or approval.

If I was an acceptable CO, it was because of the help I had from great men like Harry Staley, Roger Kettleson, Art Mulligan and many others - good pilots and brave men. I could not have done it without them or all of you.

My recovery has been slow; the problem is the chemo (Taxol) and age of 80 years. One does not come back so quickly. It may be months or a year, but I will be in San Antonio next year and once again thanks for all the warm feelings you have given me - it sure helps.

JIM PETTUS (12/25/1999 via e-mail.)

***** **FROM JIM CHERKAUER, SECRETARY** *****

Board of Directors as of January 1, 2000

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James T. Pettus, Headquarters (2001)

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

Please note that the Vice President's zip code has been changed slightly. It is 89145-5115.

For all of you golfers who played at Tucson, the report of the results of that tournament are in.

We had a good turnout of 32 of our golf enthusiasts on a beautiful morning in Tucson. The greens had been over seeded just a couple weeks before and therefore required frequent watering. Knowing our play would be interrupted when the sprinklers came on, the management gave us a special rate. That allowed us to have funds for cash awards and we came out with a surplus of \$62.50. Those monies will go into the pot for our next golf outing in San Antonio.

The winners: Longest drive, Sam Commons who also claimed closest to the pin on one of the selected holes. Low net honors went to Bob Claycombe who also won closest to the pin honors on the other selected hole.

Clete Angermeier and Jane Burnett turned in the highest gross scores. There are just some days things don't go as planned... on golf courses.

For golfers of our age group, we have some solid players out there! We are a part of the fortunate that can still appreciate the beauty of most golf courses and have the physical ability to go out and knock the ball around! If you don't play the game, you wouldn't understand that. So, hang in there ... and keep swinging!!

Bob Claycombe has our golf plaque for the year. He will bring it to San Antonio to be awarded to our next year's champ.

Max Axelsen, Golf Coordinator

Reporting a change of address is **CARL M. CRAMER**, 64th Pilot and CO. Carl's new address and phone numbers are 629 Summerdale Dr. Knoxville, TN 37922 and 423-777-2207.

EDWARD L. GAMMILL, 63rd Aircraft Maintenance from Phoenix, AZ, sent the following to the editor. He had been writing a bit of history of his earlier life for his children when he came upon this. It had been among materials left to him by his mother.

Some time back but for unknown reasons it was put aside and overlooked. It is a poem about how we handled our lives prior to and in the depression years. The younger generation would never understand this. The author is unknown.

IGNORANCE IS BLISS

It was not fine, my childhood home;
We had no car or telephone.
The light was shed from coal-oil lamps;
We never heard of watts or amps.
A fire place and wood burner gave us heat.
Our home was small but very dear.
It had a heap of love and cheer;
Also an outhouse in the rear.
Electric blankets were unknown,
And mother's "comforts" were hand sewn.
We had no washer-dryer fine;
We rubbed and hung out on a line.
We never saw a TV show;
There was no such thing as radio.
Our luxuries were few indeed;
Yet, somehow, we filled every need.
A happier home you'd never find.
But now a thought just crossed my mind;
How did we manage to exist?
Think of the handouts that we missed;
We had no food stamps - yet we ate;
There never was an empty plate.
No welfare checks were then doled out;
We paid our way or did without.
And we lived happily as can be
In what is now called poverty.
We were content, you may be sure,
And never knew that we were poor!

United States "police action" in Korea started on June 27, 1950. Many of our members also participated in this "war." Of the estimated total of 142,118 casualties there were 30,606 listed as Killed in Action, 105,897 Wounded in Action and 8,194 listed as Missing in Action, as of December 31, 1953. Some 800 "unknown soldiers" from that war lie buried in the Punch Bowl cemetery in Honolulu. Until recently very little was being done by the Department of Defense to identify any of those 800. A group of concerned citizens has organized and has put pressure on the Pentagon to do DNA matching of the remains of these soldiers with the DNA collected from 1200 families who sent maternal line DNA samples to the Defense Department.

One of the editor's buddies from Cadet days and service in the 6th AAF during WW II is one of those who has placed a great deal of pressure on the Pentagon, with the aid of senators and other congressmen, to begin DNA matching with those 800 bodies buried in Hawaii. The resistance to this

course of action was great with a multitude of excuses being offered as to why this was not practicable or feasible. When noted scientists came out to say that it would be easier to do DNA matching on Korean veterans remains than on Vietnam bodies due to the climatic conditions in Korea vs. Vietnam and despite the decades of additional elapsed time from the Korean War to the Vietnam war, the Pentagon relented.

On the May 21, 1999, CBS Evening News Dan Rather read the following statement:

The Pentagon announced today that it will use DNA technology to try to identify the remains of hundreds of US Soldiers killed in the Korean War and buried as unknowns in Hawaii. DNA matching was used last year to identify the Vietnam-era airman buried in the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington, Virginia.

Let's hope that they make an honest effort to identify as many of these men as possible and bring closure to many families who are still wondering what happened to loved ones they lost in that war. [Later reports indicate that the testing will be on 6 bodies per year at most.]

*****SEEKING INFORMATION ABOUT 43rd VETERANS*****

PETER COMPTON and his sister, VICTORIA COMPTON, are looking for anyone who remembers their dad, IRWIN RUSSELL COMPTON, a pilot in the 403rd. IRWIN served in the 403rd from Dec. '43 to April '44. After completing his tour, he apparently volunteered to fly with one of the B-25 Groups and was with them from May '44 to Oct. '44. He then became a tactical recon pilot and flew P-40s, A-20s and B-25s. It seems that IRWIN wanted to stay in the SWP as he had met a nurse there and did not want to leave her. In time they were married. VICTORIA and PETER would like to learn who were IRWIN's crewmembers while in the 403rd and anything else anyone knows about their dad. IRWIN was also known as COMP or TEX. He died on January 7, 1983.

PETER's address, phone numbers and e-mail address are:

14481 SW Arabian Drive, Beaverton, OR 97008-6774

503-524-5270 and 503-590-6423

<pcompton@compuserve.com>.

This inquiry comes from CHUCK SNYDER via e-mail. The editor notes that his e-mail address is <EZsnyder@aol.com>. Could he be related to EDWIN Z. "EZ" SNYDER, 63rd Radio Operator from Granbury, TX?

CHUCK is asking for any information any of you might have on the B-24 44-41672 and crewmen that left Clark Field on Mar. 9, 1945 en route to Tacloban. The next news of the plane and crew came on Sept. 1952 when the remains of the crew and aircraft were found by a native on a mountain on Leyte. The crew consisted of Pilot Lt. PAUL WITTENBERGER, Lt. CLARENCE MILLER, Lt. WILLIS BUNDY, Sgt. SARAFIN URBANSKI and Sgt. DALE SWONGER.

The remains of the crew are interred communally at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, MO.

CHUCK is writing memorials on Lt. WITTENBERGER and other men who did not return from the war and are from CHUCK's hometown. He writes that he has located, via the Internet, a BARNEY McCLENDON, 403rd Sqd., who flew two missions as Radio Operator with WITTENBERGER shortly before the fatal flight.

CHUCK's home address is: 6700 Bloomington
Richfield, MN 55423

E-mail received from BETTY G. TRIPP requests help in gathering information about her brother, Cpl. ROBERT C. GREEN. Robert was the Tail Gunner on the crew of 2nd Lt. WILLIAM F. COURTNEY. They were on detached service with the 43rd BG and 63rd Sqd. from the 90th BG 320th

Sqd. as of Dec. 10, '44. On the night of Jan. 17-18, 1945, most of the crew were killed when their plane crashed on Catanduanes Island, Philippines. Others in the crew were 2nd Lt. **RICHARD C. PRATER**, Copilot, Flt. Officer **JOHN STROZIER**, Navigator, 2nd Lt. **EDGAR MORLEY**, Bombardier, Sgt. **WILLIAM C. MABIUS**, Engineer, Pfc. **LONNIE SCHRADER**, Radio Operator, Cpl. **E. APCENSKI**, Nose gunner, Sgt. **JOHN TURNER**, Waist Gunner, Cpl. **ELLSWORTH SCHOLL**, Waist Gunner, and Lt. **WILLIAM HARRIS** an extra crewman who survived.

BETTY has her brother's army file and death file. She is attempting to get a history of the 43rd for Dec. '44 and Jan. '45. She would like to know what mission they were on that night, etc. Anyone, who can help, please contact BETTY at 300 Hickory Lane, Mauldin, SC 29662. Her e-mail address is <trippworks@juno.com>.

"My father was **JOHN TALLITSCH**, one of 'Ken's Men.' He served as a bombardier on one of the B-24s flown by the 403rd Sqd. I also believe he served as the squadrons' bombardier. However, as is typical of many of those who fought in WW II my dad didn't talk much of his experiences during the war or with his fellow crew and squadron members. Dad did speak very highly of the members of his crew and squadron, but would never talk about his experiences. Therefore, I would appreciate it if any of you in the 13th Recon or 403rd Bomb Squadron who knew my dad would drop me a note telling me about some of the things my dad did and encountered during his time in New Guinea flying with those squadrons."

"You may reach me as **Robert B. Tallitsch**, 3402 10th Ave., Moline, IL 61265. Or reach me via e-mail at <bitallitsch@augustana.edu>."

The above came via **PHYLLIS CHRISTIANSEN** of Hampton, NE. She is the widow of the late **LES CHRISTIANSEN** of the 403rd. **PHYLLIS** also reported the deaths of two of our comrades **BONSALL** and **WHITEHEAD** listed in the section **TAPS - LAST ROLL CALL**.

A large bundle of materials arrived from **EMANUEL "MANNY" A. LaPORTE**. It was put on display at the Hospitality Room at the Tucson reunion for our members to browse through. He is desperately seeking anyone, pilots or crewmen, who flew with his uncle, 1st Lt. **MICHAEL LaPORTE**. Their crew was on a strike mission out of Jackson Strip APO 929 Port Moresby, N. G. on Sept. 2, 1943. Their mission was to strike the runways at Cape Gloucester. It is believed that their plane was shot down by enemy aircraft.

Manny has done a great deal of research regarding this crew and mission and has collected considerable material. He is seeking further information to augment his records.

The crew consisted of: **MICHAEL LaPORTE**, pilot; **HOWARD L. MUNSON**, Copilot; **WILLIAM H. VANDERGRIFT**, Navigator; **GORDON R. SPOOR**, Bombardier; **IDRIS T. JENKINS**, Engineer; **TURE E. LINDSTROM**, Asst. Engineer; **ALVAN B. ROWE**, Radio Operator; **ORVILLE R. SEVERSON**, Asst. Radio Operator; **ROBERT J. FRANKENBERGER**, Gunner and **FRANCIS W. NEVILLE**, Gunner.

Manny's address is 443 Bear Ridge Road, Pleasantville, NY 10570. His e-mail address is <Seabee1@erols.com>.

ARTHUR D. BYRNE, 65th and Headquarters Intelligence as well as Group Historical Officer now from Knoxville, TN, was happy to hear of the whereabouts of **LELAND H. "SKIP" AGARD III**, Associate member from Savannah, TN. **ARTHUR** wrote to **SKIP** to tell him that he knew **SKIP**'s dad, the late **LELAND H. "HERB" AGARD II**, when both were in the 65th and Headquarters. He recalls **HERB** replacing **PAUL HANSEN** as Group C.O. shortly after the end of the war.

ARTHUR says that he has written an account of the 43rd activities from August - December 1945 for **LARRY HICKEY**, Associate member and author from Boulder, CO. It is supposed to appear in our elusive history book.

*****TAPS - LAST ROLL CALL*****

KEN AHLESMEYER of Fort Wayne, IN, May 1998. God Bless.

JESSE DEAN BONSALL of Scotia, NE, Nov. 1999. God Bless.

DALE and **ELLEN CRAWFORD** son and daughter-in-law of **LEONARD M. CRAWFORD** of the 403rd report the death of **LEONARD** on March 2, 1999. They write that they dearly miss him.

"He loved the newsletter tremendously and he would share stories with us. That newsletter would rekindle a lot of memories for him." They thank the association for sharing memories and helping in making his life a happy one. "God Bless you all!" God Bless.

ELEANOR JEAN HOUSEHOLDER, wife of **WILBERT H.** 63rd Navigator from New Brighton, PA, passed away in Oct. 1999. God Bless.

NATALIE STEIN has reported the death of her husband, **CHARLES K. STEIN**, 403rd Navigator from Studio City, CA. God Bless.

JOHN TALLITSCH, 403rd Bombardier from Rock Island, IL. God Bless.

JIM WHITEHEAD, 403rd Mechanic from Fenton, MO. God Bless.

THOMAS W. WHITT, 403rd Nose Gunner from Raleigh, NC. God Bless.

In the October Newsletter we reported no news of **ALTON "DOUG" LEAMAN**, 403rd Tail Gunner from Indianapolis, IN. E-mail from **FRANK HOHMANN**, 65th & 403rd Flight Engineer from Princeton Junction, NJ, sends word that **DOUG** is not in good health. He has lost a lung to emphysema and also has heart problems.

FRANK writes that he and **DOUG** were on the same crew and are the last surviving members of that crew. He wrote to **DICK HEMPHILL**, 65th Radio Operator from Duncan, SC, who had been inquiring about **DOUG**.

FRANK also sent e-mail to report that the special edition of the Newsletter was a good job. He did not attend the reunion, but says that he feels like he had been at the reunion after reading that edition.

FRANK like some others wondered about **BILL's BAD BOY** list in that edition. He says that his tail gunner is in touch with **MARJORIE BENEDETTI**, wife of **EUGENE "DUTCH" BENEDETTI**, 65th Pilot from Monterrey Park, CA. She informed them that she has her hands full with caring for **DUTCH** who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. **FRANK** is disturbed to see **DUTCH** listed as one of the Bad Boys. There is no way **MARJORIE** has time to take care of those dues.

In addition **FRANK** contacted **ROBERT H. BUTLER**, 63rd Bombardier, Past President and founder of this association from Fayetteville, NC. He says that he believes that **DUTCH** and **BOB** were the ones to come up with the idea of forming a 43rd BG Association.

[There were a number of errors in that list. Several members have pointed out this fact to us, and steps have been taken to correct the errors. Widows were included by oversight. Please accept our sincere apologies for these errors.]

In later e-mail, **FRANK** writes that his sister-in-law ran into **ELIZABETH HENSLER**, wife of **JOSEPH HENSLER**, 65th Pilot from Lawrenceville, NJ, who lives nearby. **JOE** has been in the Princeton Nursing Home & Rehabilitation Center for the past 8 months. His address at the home is: 35 Quarry St., Princeton, NJ 08540.

Frank also reported on **ALTON LEAMAN**. [See next article.]

ALTON "D" DOUG LEAMAN, 403rd Tail Gunner from Indianapolis, IN, has responded to the inquiry about him in the Oct. Newsletter (PAGE 17). His letter dated Dec. 14th informs us that he was going to the hospital on Friday (Dec. 17th) to see if they could somehow remove a small cancerous growth in the upper bowel. It can't be operated on due to the length of time he has been on heart medication and blood thinners. He writes that he will call **FRANCIS TUCHER**, 65th Flight Engineer from Indianapolis, IN, as both men live in the same town.

ALTON goes on to write that **EUGENE "DUTCH" BENEDETTI**, 65th Pilot from Monterrey Park, CA, was their second Copilot and was shot up badly on Jan. 9, 1943. Ten years later he had found that **DUTCH** had been sent to the States where they had reconstructed the right side of his head that had been blown away. **DUTCH** went on to become a college professor and won several awards as a runner in his age group. **MARGE BENEDETTI** enclosed a picture of Dutch in his wheelchair, but she said that he does not recognize people.

ALTON writes that his brother died last March from the same disease. His brother, **HERB**, was in the #1055 Engineers in Germany during the war. He says the outfit built bridges for Gen. Patton's men and progressed all the way to the North Elbe River in Northern Germany.

[**ALTON**'s handwritten letter is not easy to decipher in places. The editor hopes that he has the gist of the letter correct. If not, he apologizes for his errors.]

LEWIS H. DAWS, 65th Crew from Rialto, CA, has noticed that more and more of our members are recalling stories from their service in the 43rd that appear in our Newsletter. He likes this since this history would be lost otherwise. He has recalled a number of these which he is passing along for inclusion in this edition.

LEW was going to look up **BOB BRICK** in Tucson to talk about B-36s. **BOB** did not appear in Tucson to the editor's knowledge. He is also not listed in our 1998 Roster. **LEW** was stationed at Rapid City, SD, for 21 months during the Korean War and worked on B-36s. To the best of his knowledge the B-36 did not take part in that war. He says that this aircraft was a nightmare on maintenance. They had to be fueled over the wing that took a long time. They could not be refueled while in flight. The outfit flew recon missions up to 36 hours in length.

LEW points out that in a photo he had sent to the editor previously, the gun he is holding as he was standing alongside one of his planes was a 1917 Eddystone rifle for which he was issued no ammunition. At the time he carried a 45 which was not Government Issue.

He sent along some information on the Queen Mary that he downloaded from the Internet. He was surprised to learn that the ship was outfitted in Australia to carry troops. His wife had told him that it carried her uncle and nephew from Australia to Africa where the front line Australian troops were shipped and saw plenty of action. **LEW** figures that those men sailed to Scotland before going to North Africa. He is going by the log of the Queen Mary shown on the Internet and at the end of this article.

When the war with Japan commenced, the British informed the Australian government that it could not help defend Australia. Of course its best troops were fighting on North Africa and were not shipped home immediately to defend their own country. So when Americans and supplies started arriving in Australia, they were very welcome. **Lew** and many others assembled P-40s in Australia at that time. In due time the war in Africa was winding down. The Australian troops were being shipped home where they were given a short leave before being sent to New Guinea. Quite a contrast to fight in the desert and then in the hot, humid jungles.

LEW, along with so many of you, was on the return voyage of "The Queen" from Boston to Sydney. He had heard but could never confirm that a German U-boat had come close to spotting the Queen on that voyage. He did read several years later that a U-boat had sunk a ship close to the Queen on that voyage. **LEW** says he thinks the voyage was for 39 days and not 40 as reported on the Internet. [**LEW**

see diary of the late **GEORGE J. CARTER**, Headquarters, which ran for 3 issues of this Newsletter - July '98, October '98 and January '99. It covers 40 days.]

The report in the last Newsletter from **DICK HEMPHILL** agrees with **LEW**'s memory of the incident of the Jap plane following *LOOSE GOOSE*. **LEW** is happy that the Jap plane that followed the *LOOSE GOOSE* into the landing pattern did not return as he was refueling the plane.

He does not recall if the late **JOSH A. BARNES Jr.**, 65th Pilot, was ever the squadron C.O. He does recall Lt. **JAMES HAYES** was commander at the time they were assembling P-40s at Richmond before moving to Newcastle, Australia.

LEW writes that **PAULINE HEWITT** wife of **ROBERT D.**, Line Chief from Grand Forks, ND, is attempting to get **BOB**'s diary into print. She sent **LEW** the Newcastle portion which ran from June 22, 1942, when he left Randwick Race Course and went by motor convey to Newcastle. **LEW** was on leave in Sydney from June 27 - June 30, 1942 and again from July 10 - July 13, 1942. His pass for this latter leave was signed by Lt. **HAYES**.

In June of 1942 **LEW** had asked **DOREEN** to marry him. She accepted his offer, but her adoptive mother would not consent to this. At that time 21 was the legal age in Australia. On Friday, July 17th **LEW** was off duty and on the train from Newcastle to Sydney, a journey of about 100 miles. **DOREEN** had turned 21 on the 7th of the month, so they decided to get married the next day. With **DOREEN**'s mother's permission they had a full church wedding and reception. Many of **DEE**'s friends and relatives attended and her adoptive mother was a most gracious hostess.

LEW returned to Newcastle the following Monday only to find he had been assigned guard duty while away. The First Sergeant assigned him a week of KP as punishment. **LEW** was a PFC at that time. Lt. **HAYES** had earlier denied him permission to marry.

During that week of KP, Lt. **HAYES** had a barracks inspection. He stopped and asked **LEW** if he had gotten married. **LEW** said, "Yes." Much to his surprise he was given a 36-hour pass when he completed his KP duty. That time became their honeymoon.

The next visit to Sydney was in August 1943 when he flew down in a C-47 while on sick leave. **LEW** had spent the past month in a hospital with a burned leg. When returning to his post from Sydney, **LEW** helped preflight a C-47 that in turn they grounded. So he had an extra day in Sydney. He was a S/Sgt at this time. On August 5, 1943, **LEW** completed paperwork for transportation for **DEE** to head to the States. The form was signed by Capt. **DONALD A. GRAHAM**, Acting Sqd. Commander.

For you Queen Mary buffs, this is an incomplete history of the Queen during the War Years.

March 21, 1940: The **QUEEN MARY** departs New York, USA for Sydney, Australia to be fitted as a troopship.

May 5, 1940: The first voyage as a troop transport. Sailed in convoy with **AQUITANIA**, **MAURITANIA (II)**, **EMPRESS OF BRITAIN**, **EMPRESS OF CANADA** AND **EMPRESS OF JAPAN** from Sydney to Gourock, Scotland with 5,500 troops.

February 18-March 28, 1942: "40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS" VOYAGE FROM BOSTON, USA to Sydney, Australia. This is the first time the **QUEEN MARY** carried American troops.

August 2-7, 1942: the first time a complete division of war carried on any ship. First Armoured Infantry Division (15,125 troops and 863 crew).

October 2, 1942: **QUEEN MARY** collides with the British light cruiser **CORACOA**. 70 tons of cement was used on the **QUEEN MARY** to patch the bow at Gourock, Scotland.

Like so many others of us who find it difficult to remember if we have paid our annual dues or not, Associate member **BARBARA A. GANNON** from Johnstown, PA, has sent a check for Life Membership. **BARB** writes that her dad, **GEORGE KISEL**, 403rd Sqd. from Johnstown has begun to take an interest in the Newsletter. In the past he would not talk of the war years. One day **BARB** asked him if he would like to read about some of his buddies in the 43rd? He took the Newsletter with him and commented on the **MICHAEL CLARINGBOULD** books. **BARB** says she will give her dad the

Newsletter from now on and "... hopefully we'll get some history for Dad's grandchildren! Thanks so much!"

MICHAEL T. EDSALL, 64th Pilot from Bristol, IN, has asked his wife, **SANDRA**, to respond to the inquiry by **ANDREW STANKO**, 403rd Gunner from Chicago, IL. **ANDREW** had asked if anyone had information about his crew. **MICHAEL** reports that the Bombardier, **KEN AHLESMEYER** from Ft. Wayne, IN, who **MICHAEL** knew as "Doc," passed away in May 1998. **MICHAEL**, Doc and some other friends were all in the reserves together.

SANDY writes that her father served under Gen. Patton and that he never discussed the war with his children. **MIKE** does discuss his time in the service. **MIKE** is a good deal older than she is, but she finds his stories very interesting even though she did not like history while studying it in school.

If anyone cares to get in touch with **MIKE** here is the needed information.

Phone: 219-848-7556.

Address: P.O. Box 845, Bristol, IN 46507-0845

E-mail: SEdsall@aol.com

Also responding to **ANDREW STANKO**'s request regarding information about his crew is **GARRETT L. MINNICK**, 64th Medic from Cumberland, MD. **GARRETT** handed the editor his response while attending the Tucson reunion. He says that a number of years ago he located Sgt. **LAWRENCE TWIGG**, 403rd who like **GARRETT** was from Cumberland. **LAWRENCE** died in July 1994 as the result of a stroke he suffered three years earlier. His wife, **MARJORIE**, died in December 1994. They are survived by three daughters.

The rest of the crew was made up of **JOSEPH CASEY**, Pilot, **JOHN GALLAMAN**, Copilot, **KEN AHLESMEYER**, Bombardier, **AL GONGAL**, Flight Engineer, **ROBERT BURKE**, Radio Operator, and Gunners **ANDREW STANKO**, **DAMON COPESS** and **LAVERN GREEN**. [Our 1998 Roster lists a **BOB BURKE** of the 403rd and from Medway, MA.]

Requesting information of our Past President, **SAMUEL F. COMMONS**, 65th Flight Engineer from Flourtown, about joining Association PA, is **HARRY "DOUG" TANNER**. He does not say whether or not he was in the 43rd, but maybe some of you will recognize the name.

His address is 2923 Roy Bunch Road, Sulphur, LA 70663.

His e-mail address is <htanner@usunwired.net>.

A short note from **EDWARD A. DALY**, 65th Bombardier from Ormond Beach, FL, wants to know why the October Newsletter credits him with paying his dues through 2000, but his mailing label on the Newsletter has him paid through 1998? [Ed, the mailing label should have been updated by now. Please check. It takes time to process all of the changes we receive.]

After reading in the Oct. '99 Newsletter the story by **DICK HEMPHILL**, 65th Radio Operator from Duncan, SC, of the Japanese plane which followed them right to the home base at night without the crew being aware of its presence, **ALTON "DOUG" LEAMAN**, 403rd Tail Gunner from Indianapolis, IN, writes of his story that day. After breaking away from the clouds the crew sighted a Jap Betty Bomber 100' to their right. "He was so even with us, I could not shoot. He suddenly took off to the right." As **ALTON**'s plane approached home base, they were told to abort. They then flew to Port Moresby.

DOUG says that he has had 5 years of down time now and works jigsaw puzzles and does the dishes as his only work. He has 3 blocked main arteries that are inoperable. His right lung is gone too.

DOUG says that he and **FRANK HOHMANN**, 65th & 403rd Flight Engineer from Princeton Junction, NJ, are the only ones left from their crew. **EUGENE "DUTCH" BENEDETTI**, 65th Pilot from

Monterrey Park, CA, is losing out to Alzheimer's. His wife, MARGE, who is very small, wheels DUTCH around in his wheel chair.

DOUG says that his immune system is such that he too can not go out and mingle with others. His minister comes now and then and "...that's all." He sends his best to all. He takes 29 pills a day. He has used up all of their savings on medicines, but now the VACM takes care of him. We wish you only the best DOUG.

GEORGE O. ANDERSON, 403rd Pilot from Blairstown, NJ, wrote to thank the staff for all it is doing with the Newsletter that he feels makes it possible for the Association to sustain itself. He is sorry about not making it to Tucson this year, but his wife, JEAN, had a hip replacement. She has been doing fine with that but following the surgery she has developed a good deal of arthritis elsewhere.

He wants to be certain we have his phone number correct. The one you sent us is the one in the Roster, GEORGE.

GEORGE says that he "Finally got to see his Flight Engineer after all these years." Due to an area phone code change he almost did not make a connection. GEORGE learned that his Flight Engineer flew a mission to Balikpapan while GEORGE was in the hospital. It seems the pilot was killed and the copilot lost his cool so the flight engineer had to take over and save the plane and crew. He was awarded the DFC for this endeavor. [Why not tell us who he is, GEORGE?]

He hopes to make it to San Antonio in 2000 and sends his best to all his "fellow association members."

The Sweetheart of the 43rd, E. TRACY TUCCIARONE, Associate from Indianapolis, IN, and Webmaster of the 43rd web site, has sent the editor a list of things that she would like very much to receive from our members so that she can include the information on the web site. For those who did not see this in the masthead at the beginning of the Newsletter, the URL is <<http://www.kensmen.com>>.

There are tons of things I'd love to have information/pictures about that would help Ken's Men web site a great deal. Please look over the following list and send any info, memories, pictures, etc., to me via email at: kens43rd@aol.com or bomborgirl@kensmen.com, or via regular mail to Tracy Tucciarone, 736 North Bosart Avenue, Indianapolis, IN 46201-2955. If possible, avoid sending original, precious materials as the responsibility for them is so great, I'd feel awful if an accident were to happen or if they were lost in the mail. You can get photos scanned at most local print shops. They may even e-mail them for you to either of the above addresses or they will put them on a floppy disk/CD so you can mail them via the U. S. Postal Service.

My desire is that the Ken's Men web site not only include 'reference material' such as duty stations, COs, honors, etc., but also stories and pictures that depict the flesh and blood experiences, the daily life you men endured. I want to make your history palpable to your kids, grandkids, and any WWII buff who wants an answer to the question, "What was it LIKE?"

For certain items on the list below, I will start a collection of stories/memories in those specific areas and then, if I have enough information, will upload to your web site a little section on just those specific topics. Please know that if you send me info and I don't respond, that I got your info just fine but am undoubtedly inundated with e-mail (or just busy making web pages!) Any info you send will be deeply appreciated! THANKS!

WWII slang - to add to Shad Shaddox's list off the History Section of the Ken's Men Website.

Slang for aviation, food, women, guns, ammo, the brass, the enemy, anything...

Thoughts on/Memories of General Kenney - what kind of a General was he? How did he affect morale, procedures, etc.?

Thoughts on MacArthur

Thoughts on/Memories Ken McCullar or Sarnoski

Stories from the Battle of the Bismarck Sea

Mission stories

Ground Crew stories! I have so very few. Info on daily life, training, particular stores, etc.
 HQ/Medical/Chaplaincy/Other crew stories! Ditto above
 Japanese Ship Code (i.e., "sugar Charlie") - what they mean? I'd love to get as complete a list as possible of these code names.
 Thoughts on/Memories of Tokyo Rose's broadcasts - what did you think when you heard her?
 Where were you when you heard her broadcasts? What did she say? What music do you remember her playing?
 Holidays on the islands - how did you celebrate Christmas, Thanksgiving, etc.?
 Daily Life - tell me about the food, jungle juice, movies, girls, bunking, showers, entertainment (what DID you do for fun over there?), mail call, poker, disease, the heat, what you did on R&R, what kept you sane over there in the jungles?
 List of KIA/MIA. I would absolutely love to have a list with EACH and EVERY name of Ken's Men who were lost or killed in the line of duty. Any ideas on how I could go about this?
 POWs - both Jap and ours. What did we do with captured Japanese soldiers? Who ran the detention centers? Where were they located and how/by whom were Japanese prisoners taken there? How were Yankee POWs treated in Jap camps? If you were a POW, how did it happen? What did you experience?
 Picture of the B-24 *WHO'S NEXT*
 List of the 43rd B-17s, including if possible, pictures, names, serial numbers, disposition, any incidentals
 How did Bomber Groups cooperate with Fighter Groups? How were the Groups coordinated?
 Flight formation - ex. "pattern bombing," "salvo," "train"...the different kinds of flying formations, when each was used and why?
 How was it decided which Squadron would lead a mission and which plane would lead the formation?
 Ever skip bomb in a Liberator? I know one crew which did! Tell me what happened.
 Where did the name "Seahawks" come from?
 Did the 64th Sqd. members have a nickname? If so, what was it and where did it come from?
 Briefing and Debriefing - how were these different for pilots vs. other crewmembers? What sort of info was given/asked for? When did these take place? How soon before/after a mission?
 Any memories/knowledge of "Yorkie Doodle Dandy," the little Yorkshire terrier (found in a New Guinea foxhole by Ed Downey) which ended up becoming a mascot for the boys in the SWPA?
 Radio Operations - how were transmissions 'encrypted'? How were Jap transmissions dealt with? What was training like?
 Getting to your theatre on the Queen Mary or the S. S. Argentina - what was it like? How long did it take? What was the route? [Tracy, see the log of the late GEORGE J. CARTER, Headquarters, in the 67th, 68th and 69th editions of the Newsletters.]
 Stateside love ones - any letters that aren't too personal you'd care to share and that would give us a 'feel' for the times (either events in the SWPA or stateside)? How did getting letters from home affect morale? How did censorship work? What sorts of information were censored out? Who did the censoring?
 Was there anything you felt compelled to carry with you on a mission for 'luck'?
 The Red Cross - tell me about the people who worked there, what they did for you, how they helped.
 Anything you Ken's Men think should be on the web site, just tell me about it!

The secretary has received the Newsletters from the 19th Bombardment Assoc., the 90th Bomb Group Assoc., and 24 Squadron R.A.A.F. Association. They have all held reunions in 1999. Of interest to some of you will be the new Secretary and address for the 24 Squadron.

A. T. (Bert) Wolfe. 35 Hillcrest Parade, Highfields. N.S.W. 2289. Phone - (02) 4943 4599.

WENDELL W. JONES, 64th Top Gunner from Raleigh, NC, notified us of the passing of **THOMAS W. WHITT** of Raleigh, NC. **WENDELL** writes that he had known for some time that **THOMAS** lived in his area, and he had meant to contact **TOM**, but he never did and is sorry that he did not do so. He did enclose a copy of the obit for **THOMAS**.

WENDELL thought the Tucson reunion was great as they all have been. He says that **JIM** and **LOUISE THOMPSON**, our hosts, as well as **BOB WATSON**, our reunion director, did a real fine job. He enjoyed visiting with the secretary/editor and his wife **ANITA**. He hopes that we will meet again in San Antonio and that his wife, **PEGGY**, will be with him then. [We look forward to that meeting.]

WENDELL wrote his letter in cursive writing and hopes that the editor can still read handwriting and is not so wedded to a computer than he has lost that knack. [Your handwriting is excellent.]

Also having a great time at the reunion were **NORMA** and **RODGER LITTLE**, 63rd Pilot from Rockledge, FL. They write that "... because we are green grass and rivers and Atlantic Ocean people, it was quite an experience, also!!!"

They also wanted the address of Robert Tinsman who had reported the death of his mother, **STELLA TINSMAN**, (Oct. 1999 Newsletter) wife of the late **JOSEPH**, 63rd gunner.

In a later letter, they wrote that they had met the late **STELLA** and **JOE TINSMAN**, 63rd Tail Gunner, at a 43rd reunion several years ago. **STELLA** was happy to meet another WAC. **STELLA** had not met another lady who served as a WAC since the war. Although they did not know each other before, it turned out that both had been assigned to the Air Corps and stationed at Langley Field, VA, but at different times.

STELLA did not attend any reunions after the death of her husband, **JOE**.

They also report a change of their telephone area code. Their phone number is 321-636-0559. Norma writes that they live in Brevard County, FL, where the Kennedy Space Center is located, and the citizens there fought hard to get area code 321, as 3, 2, 1 is a part of the countdown for every launch.

E-mail from **NORM NEUBERT**, 11th BG pilot from Aug. '44 through April '45 tells that while on R&R leave at Hickam Field, Hawaii, on New Years Day, he noticed a boyhood friend rushing towards him from operations. It turned out to be **GEORGE FAULKNER** a navigator who was seeking transport to the SWP. Norm wished him luck. He did not see **GEORGE** again but believes that **GEORGE** was assigned to the 43rd and is seeking information from anyone who might have any information on him.

Some years later, **GEORGE**'s mother married a friend of **NORM**'s. She told Norm that **GEORGE** never returned from the Pacific. Still later **NORM** met **GEORGE**'s son, but he knew nothing about his father's service outfit. All he knew was that his father did not return.

NORM's e-mail address is <Rodney1950@aol.com>.

LUCY and **REGINALD E. TATRO** report a new address: 10 Congress St., Greenfield, MA. Presumably the phone number and the zip code remain unchanged. **LUCY** writes that making the move from their own "homestead" to an apartment is some change, but they feel it is better that they do this now and dispose of all of the unneeded furniture and other materials accumulated since 1943 rather than put the burden on their very busy children. Their oldest is Gina who lives in Arizona and is not well. They also have two sons.

She also writes that they discovered mementos from Clark Field that they had forgotten about. These brought back to mind many stories they could tell about their two tours at Clark. [Perhaps they will share some with us in the future.]

Reporting the failure to receive a July issue of the Newsletter but getting the October issue is **ARVID J. HOUGLUM**, 64th Pilot from Grandview, TX. A replacement issue was sent out immediately.

ARVID added information on the August 25, 1945, mission over Japan reported by **JOUBERT S. "MAC" McCREA**, 65th Pilot from Alexandria, VA, on page 10 of the Oct. '99 Newsletter. He says that in the 64th they did carry three 500-lb. bombs. "This was a very special mission of the 'we dare you to shoot at us' type. We were assigned altitudes of 4000 to 5000 feet with instructions to fly over all airfields and AA installations along the east coast of Kyushu and if we encountered any enemy resistance, we were to pick targets of opportunity, drop our small bomb load, and return to our Ie Shima base. Well, it was a beautiful sunny day and we did fly north over the coastal cities until we reached the coast of Honshu. We then flew over Kure, turned to the east and made a slow circle over the ruins of Hiroshima. We then flew out to sea; our bombardiers disarmed our three bombs; they were dropped into the sea, and we returned to Ie Shima. To the best of my knowledge that mission marked the last time that B-24s carried bombs in WWII."

ARVID and CLARE attended the 1999 reunion on Tucson. Their e-mail address is <ARVIDTX@aol.com>.

Another "lost" 43rd vet found us via the 43rd's web site in Oct. '99. Although he did not make it to our reunion, **MALCOLM R. OBOURN**, 403rd Navigator from 5/43 to 6/44, asked for an application form so that he could join our association. His address is P.O. Box 624, Vienna, IL 62995. His e-mail address is <nissan@isbe.accessus.net>.

NICK ARABINKO, 64th Pilot from Punta Gorda, FL, reports that the daughter of Dr. **HENRY S. BLANK**, 64th Flight Surgeon, has informed him that Doc has moved to an Assisted Living Facility in Gainesville, FL. He was 94 last Dec. 17th. HENRY did not make it to the Tucson reunion and was really missed by many of us. His new address is Dr. Henry S. Blank, C/O Clare Bridge of Gainesville, 4607 NW 53rd Avenue, Gainesville FL 32606-4357.

Although NICK and SHIRLEY missed the reunion, they did send wishes that everyone have a delightful and very successful '99 reunion.

ROGER E. VARGAS, 63rd Navigator from Riverside, CA, writes that the history of the 7th Bomb. Grp/Wing may be of particular interest to those of you who arrived in Australia in early 1942.

That history reports that the 7th BG was en route to the Philippines via Hickam Field at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack. Twelve of their B-17s arrived at Hickam on Dec. 7th 1941. The ground personnel were aboard the ship, *REPUBLIC*, en route to the Philippines. It was diverted to Australia. These troops are reported as the first American troops to arrive in Australia at Brisbane on 23 Dec. 1941. Aboard ship were personnel from the 7th Bomb. Wing consisting of the 9th, 11th, 22nd and 88th Recon Sqds. Although the destination for some of these troops was Java, some were assigned to the 19th BG. Personnel from the 7th and 19th operated jointly from Townsville and Mareeba. Eventually some of these men were assigned to the 43rd BG.

Chapter 10, "Australia," mentions these joint operations. The first strikes were flown on 23 Feb. 1942 against Rabaul. Crews from these two groups evacuated Gen. Douglas MacArthur from the Philippines.

There are many names of individuals as well as photos included in this book. ROGER suggests that you might try your local library for a copy if you are interested in the book. The second printing is dated 1998. Complete information on the book is:

7th Bomb. Grp/Wing 1918-1995 by Robert F. Dorr

Turner Publishing Company

P.O. Box 3101

Paducah, Kentucky 42002-3101 Phone: 502-443-0121.

The secretary/editor received a rather badly mangled envelope in a plastic bag provided by the U.S.P. Service with an apology for the condition of the mail. Fortunately the check inside for 2000-year dues from **LOUIS ALPE**, Headquarters from West Helena, AR, was in fine condition.

Also sending a check for his 2000-year dues is **HAROLD W. DONNER**, 63rd Gunner from Tonawanda, NY. **HAROLD** served on the crew of **KENT L. A. ZIMMERMAN**, 63rd Pilot from San Antonio, TX. It was reported at the Tucson reunion that **KENT** was not well at that time.

In a later letter **HAROLD** wrote that he applied for his **PHILIPPINE LIBERATION MEDAL** through the Philippine Embassy in Washington, DC. He sent them a letter with a copy of his discharge papers on 17 April 1999. The receipt of his letter was acknowledged and his eligibility for the medal was confirmed. In addition he was informed that he was eligible for the **PHILIPPINE REPUBLIC PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION BADGE**. He was told to send a check for \$7.00 to cover the administrative and S&H costs.

On June 14th, **HAROLD** mailed the embassy his check for that amount. On September 10th, he wrote to the embassy and asked what the delay was and what he could do to pursue further his receiving the awards.

He had heard nothing from them by mid November, and his October checking account statement did not show that the check had been cashed at that time. **HAROLD** is wondering if any others had experienced a similar fate when applying for the Philippines medals he earned during WWII?

AL O'BRIEN, Associate member from LaGrange Park, IL, wrote following the reunion that it was a "wonderful experience ... even though I am somewhat of an outsider." He found everyone cordial and helpful.

He says that those who planned the reunion " ... should be commended for picking such a lovely hotel, providing wonderful food & entertainment, and the insight provided by two extraordinary slide shows."

AL says that he met with several 63rd men who knew his late brother, particularly **ORION ROGERS**, 63rd Pilot from Peoria, AZ, who had gone through flight training with him, had headed overseas with him and was assigned to the same outfit as his brother. [The editor is not certain just who **AL**'s brother was, but it may have been **NORMAN**. Please forgive the editor if this is in error.]

AL has been corresponding via e-mail with **TRACY TUCCIARONE**, 43rd Web Site Webmaster, Sweetheart of the 43rd and Associate member, and providing her with copies of documents he has been acquiring over the past several years.

He also included a check for his 2000-year dues and for items he wished to purchase from our PX. The secretary/editor sent this on to our good treasurer and operator of our PX at the reunion, **WILLIAM H. "BILL" WILSON, Jr.**, 65th Pilot from Snyder, TX.

Telephoning and asking for information about our association and how to join it was **RUSS DAHL** who served in the 43rd in 1949-50. The secretary/editor sent him a package of materials including a newsletter, the 1998 Roster and an application form so that he may join us. It is really good to find that post war 43rd men are joining our association. The secretary pointed out to **RUSS** that the host to our excellent and latest reunion, **JAMES THOMPSON, Jr.**, 63rd Air Mechanic from Tucson, AZ, was also a post-war veteran of the 43rd.

WILLIAM McMURRAY, 63rd Air Craft Maintenance from Berlin, CT, wrote and asked that the necessary material to join our association be sent to **CHARLES P. LARRICK**, 63rd. **CHARLES** served in the 63rd early in the war and completed his tour and returned to the States from New Guinea. He entered cadets for pilot training and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant with his wings. After earning his wings, he flew B-26 bombers.

WILLIAM and CHARLES spoke to each other via the telephone in November for the first time after losing contact for 56 years.

CHARLES address is 901 Chalfonte Drive, Alexandria, VA 22305.

An interesting story arrived via e-mail from ROLAND T. FISHER, 63rd Pilot from Lake Oswego, OR. It seems that during the Saturday night banquet/dance at the Tucson reunion, ROLAND sat at the same table with ALVIN HAAS, 64th Crew Chief from Des Plaines, IL. At the time when the 64th was still flying B-17s, ALVIN reported that the maintenance people were able to get damaged B-17s back into service by fitting some incorrect elevator panels in an inverted position with jury-rigged brackets. Not having the correct panels as replacement parts, they tried this. It worked.

ROLAND wrote that at the Tucson reunion he had the maintenance men stand at the 63rd's meeting, while he read the following poem.

Now aircrews are important people -
Their wings were not easily won.
But without the work of mechanics
All aircrew would march with a gun.
So when you see fighters and bombers
Climbing their way through the air,
Just remember -- those grease stained mechanics
Are the guys who put them up there.

[Our maintenance crews did many exceptional and unique repairs to keep our planes airborne. The editor, who served as a pilot, believes that these men did not receive the recognition they deserved. How they kept some of our planes flying under the most adverse conditions rates as a near miracle. When those of us who flew the planes arrived at the flight line, we expected as a matter of course that the plane to which we assigned would be in tip-top shape. This was nearly always the case. Little did we know how much they improvised and jury-rigged in order to make the planes combat ready.]

In later e-mail he reports that LARRY HICKEY, Associate member and military author, reported to him that the history was reaching its final stages before going to the publisher. In typical style, LARRY said that he saw no problem of meeting the deadline of the end of 1999 for sending the history to the publishers. DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH.

The e-mail keeps pouring in. John McClure, son of JAMES T. "MAC" McCLURE, 65th from Suitland, MD, writes that his dad has been admitted to the base hospital at Andrews AFB in early December '99. Due to health reasons he, MAC, could not attend the last reunion, but wanted to purchase caps at our PX. He has been referred to BILL who keeps those caps in storage from reunion to reunion.

Sending his dues for lifetime membership is LESTER "LEROY" MOORE, 403rd Nose Gunner from Marshall, MO. He writes that he is enjoying the Newsletter.

A short note thanking the staff for the excellent work in producing the Newsletter comes from JOHN J. "JACK" FAHEY, Jr., 65th Pilot from Singer Island, FL. JACK also enclosed a check for his 2000-year dues. His tour of duty overlapped that of the secretary/editor. JACK was a very respected pilot while serving in the 65th.

ROBERT W. "BOB" WHITE, 65th Tail Gunner from West Peabody, MA, after reading in the Oct. Newsletter about the planes *BLACK MAGIC* and *LUCKY LUCILLE* mailed the editor photos of *BLACK MAGIC* and *LUCKY LUCILLE* and a copy of his combat missions with ship numbers in the hopes that the planes' numbers could be matched with the pictures. [There is no way the editor can do that. This information should be in our history if and when it is completed.] He also included a photo

of the air-to-air phosphorous bombing being used by the Japanese in an attempt to break a formation of 43rd B-24s attacking Vunakanau. [The 24 Squadron's secretary's address is given earlier in this Newsletter.]

BOB flew 52 combat missions with a total of 352 hours of combat time. He flew his first 15 missions from Port Moresby, his next 18 missions from Dobodura and the last of his missions from Nadzab. All of these are located in Papua, New Guinea.

Of interest is the following from Bob's writings of his Tenth Mission on 11/13/43 to Cape Gloucester: Another North Pole recon to look for convoys. On the way up, we ran into weather and had to fly at about 1000 feet. At about 11:00 a.m., we sighted a convoy of a destroyer, a gunboat and 3 freighters. We made our run, but the bombs failed to go off. We made another run and the same thing happened. We found out later that we had wet contact points. Then eight planes came out of the sky and we had to salvo the bombs. Three of the planes were Focke-Wulfs that the Germans had given the Japs.

Three of the planes came in at my tail, but I drove them off. They must have been Army pilots as they were not too eager. They made several passes at different positions but all were driven off. Then they started dropping aerial phosphorous bombs on us. When the bombs exploded, long fingers of white smoke strung down from them. They finally left us. When we landed at Dobo, we found that one of the bombs had burned a hole about 10 inches in dia. in our left wing tip. We flew back to Port Moresby and had a total flight time of 12 hours and 20 minutes.

[The photos and other historical materials will be sent on to our historian, **ELDON "BUD" LAWSON**, 65th Bombardier from Bay Village, OH.]

E-mail from **MIKE MUELLER** as well as a message by him on the 43rd's web site, indicates that his father-in-law, **GARLAND H. GRIMSLEY**, 65th Nose Gunner from Tallahassee, FL, who has never attended one of our reunions, was seeking information regarding a couple of 65th pilots - **LORENZO "NICK" NICASTRO** and **ARLEIGH APPEL**. The secretary/editor knew both of these men while in the 65th. He reported to **MIKE** that **NICK** had passed away a few years ago but that he had no knowledge of **ARLEIGH**. If anyone has any knowledge about what has happened to **ARLEIGH**, please contact **MIKE** at his e-mail address <whitehawk@mindspring.com>.

MIKE is interested in finding a good painting or pencil drawing of a 65th B-24 with the double dice marking. He says that he once sold and reproduced aviation art from some of the best artists in this country, but he can't recall anything from the 43rd except for *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*.

Mention of *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL* brings up a point of contention regarding this particular 64th airplane. Since the Collings Foundation has painted its B-24J to be a copy of this plane, there have been all sorts of claims made about how the plane came to be painted, who flew it, how many missions it was involved with, etc. In an attempt to make a reasonable story about this particular plane, the editor would like to hear from each of you who flew in this plane or who serviced it in any way. He would like to know missions, dates and crews involved in its history in the 43rd. When was the nose art painted on the plane? How many missions did it fly from the time the nose art was painted on the plane? Who served as crew chief(s)? Who flew it back to the States where it was scrapped? Any information that you have that will add to the history of this particular plane would be helpful. Many of you know that it was one of the most widely known B-24s late in the war and immediately after the war. It is the editor's intention to attempt to collect this data and write a story for our Newsletter that would reflect the memories of those who flew the craft, but he would like to have some supporting, corroborative documentation to back up the story. Some rather wild and questionable claims are being circulated by at least one model kit manufacturer and to a somewhat lesser extent on the Internet with no supporting evidence to back them. These should be laid to rest and corrected while we are still around to do so.

BYRLE MILLER, 64th Radio Operator from Zachary, LA, has been recovering from two very serious surgeries. He has had to curtail his golf during his recovery period, but he hopes to be back in "full swing" sometime this spring. **DOLLY** has been doing fine job of nursing **BYRLE** back to health. They also have a new telephone area code. The phone number is 225-654-8869.

Keeping his membership up to date with a check for his 2000-year dues is Associate member **ARTHUR B. RITTENOUR** of Harrisonburg, VA. **ART** is the son of the late **BILL RITTENOUR** of the 65th.

DOTTIE EDWARDS, Massillon, OH, and widow of the late **RUSSELL EDWARDS**, 63rd Flight Engineer, is recovering nicely from triple by-pass surgery.

A letter written as a follow-up to a telephone conversation on Dec. 15th with **WILLIAM SOLOMON**, 403rd Radio Operator from Sarasota, FL, contains some disturbing yet encouraging news. To quote:

ROBERT "BOB" ROTH, 403rd Gunner from Redlands, California, suffered a medium stroke on November 20th and is presently unable to talk. His wife, **ARLENE**, reports that **BOB** understands everything, is walking, has full movement of his arms and fingers and is in good spirits. He is taking speech therapy. All of us, who know him and his determination, believe that it should not be too long before "fighter **BOB**" gets his voice back.

BILL thanked the staff for the great job being done with the Newsletter and sent seasons greetings to the editor and his wife, **ANITA**.

Remitting his dues for the year 2000 is **S. L. FLINNER**, 63rd Pilot from Prospect, PA. He writes that he is sorry that he missed the Tucson reunion due to medical problems. He is waiting to see what the year 2000 brings.

He also reported the death of **ELEANOR JEAN HOUSEHOLDER** (listed earlier in Newsletter). He had recently seen **WILBERT H. HOUSEHOLDER**, 63rd Navigator from New Brighton, PA, who gave him that sad news. They live fairly close to each other. S. L. says that **WILBERT** served on the crew of **DOOLEY**. [No further information about **DOOLEY**.]

He encourages the staff to keep up the good work on the Newsletter.

JOSEPH R. JANCOSKO, 64th from Pittsburgh, PA, a new Director on our Board reported for duty by e-mail to the secretary to find out what his duties would be over the next 3 years. He is all set to take over whatever responsibilities come his way. His e-mail address is <FUZZ168@AOL.COM>.

ANDREW STANKO, 403rd Gunner from Chicago, wrote to say that he missed the Tucson reunion due to a case of cellulitis in his left leg. It took a month to clear up and it came at reunion time. He has undergone all sorts of tests and has quite a collection of antibiotics, but he was over it by the time of his December letter. **ANDREW** also enclosed a check for his year 2000 dues.

He included poem taken from a V.F.W. magazine, but the editor can't use this without the proper source to give credit for using its material.

NAOMI and **M. L. "SHAD" SHADDOX** sent e-mail telling how they liked the special reunion edition of the Newsletter. **SHAD** in particular wants to "... thank all of the officers of our fine organization for the job they have done during the past year. You have been outstanding!" They plan to make the reunion in San Antonio in 2000.

Mail, e-mail and a phone call from **SAMUEL F. COMMONS**, 65th Flight Engineer and our most recent Past President from Flourtown, PA, as well as from **ALFRED "FRED" HAGEN**, Associate

member from Philadelphia, PA, brought the editor up to date on the latest episodes in the travels of FRED in his quest to recover remains of some of our lost comrades as well as in the recovery of long lost aircraft.

This information may be too late to be of help to any of us. Lifetime Cable interviewed FRED for a story entitled "Beyond Chance." This will be shown on the Lifetime Cable channel on Monday, January 17, 2000 at 8:00 P.M. The story is about his recovery of the remains of George Gaffney and his wrecked P-47 in 1998. (FRED reported on this at the Tucson reunion.) Maybe some of you saw this interview on TV.

FRED's report is as follows:

I just had another incredible experience that I wanted to share with you. After finding the remains of George Gaffney in 1998, I visited several other sites in the Sidor area. One was a small L-4 reconnaissance plane that I considered unimportant at the time. I did describe the finding in my trip notes and noted the location. One week ago, I received a letter from a fellow named Mike Osborn who requested my assistance in locating the remains of his father, Major Kindig. Kindig was killed in the crash of a L-4 in the Sidor region. I informed Mike that I'd probably found his plane already and forwarded him an excerpt from my trip notes. He forwarded same to Johnnie Webb and Mike Claringbould. Claringbould confirms that the L-4 has to be Kindig's. Is this incredible or what? What were the odds of Osborn sending a letter to the one guy who's actually found his father's plane? I'm stunned by my continuing excesses of good fortune in wreck recovery.

The following quotes are remarks about FRED's most recent trip:

I just returned from a week in Libya with David Tallichet and Ex-Senator Abourezk. The Libyans are close to awarding us the old B-24 bomber "Lady Be Good" and I have foolishly committed to doing yet another documentary on the plane's history and our recovery. Due to the US sanctions, we visited as official guests of the Libyan government and were treated like royalty. This was quite a treat for a poor, humble carpenter such as I.

The old Roman ruins in Libya are extraordinary and my fevered imagination soon saw visions of a massive documentary series on the history of Libya from antiquity to the present day, ending with a program on Qaddafi himself, replete with interviews, etc. Due to my continuing failure to recognize my human limitations, I had the audacity to propose the series. The Libyans failed to recognize my ever diminishing mental faculties and agreed to give me all the resources and equipment required in Libya for as long a period as required to complete such an Epic of the small screen. Free of charge, no less!

Well, now I'm really in a quandary. I've got proposals out to recover over 50 planes in the Pacific, a B-29 in Lake Meade, P-38's in Greenland, a B-24 in Libya, three dramatic films and a score of documentaries. This would be impressive if it were well thought out but unfortunately most of my assets are purely imaginary. What I'd give for a few more hours in my miserable little days! I also took it upon myself to propose the salvage of a Bristol Blenheim that is sitting in the Libyan "Great Sand Sea" in fairly good condition. Surprisingly, I was able to grasp onto some small fragments of sanity and refrained from volunteering to film a documentary on the Blenheim.

I had the pleasure to taking Ex-Senator George McGovern to dinner in Rome on the return trip. I had a cameraman along and we spontaneously decided to interview George regarding his experiences as a B-24 pilot in Italy in 1994-45. I think we got a couple of good "bites" for the *Lady Be Good* film (assuming that I ever actually complete it of course.)

Copy of Excerpt from My [FRED's] '98 Trip Notes:

Sunday 6/27/98

The first blush of dawn caressed the southern sky shortly after 0500. I watched with awe as gentle striations of color painted the heavenly cathedral. As the stars faded, an endless sea of cloud extended to the horizon. The cloud tops were approximately 1500' below our campsite

rising and falling, broken by occasional mountains of cumulous vapors that soared above the blue-gray mass. It was a view similar to that enjoyed from the safety of an airliner. We sat in mud, covered with filth, but our aesthetic sensibilities were undiluted by our discomforts. Long thin lines of cloud hovered low over the gold cloud mass. Due to the angle of light these long strands were black as ink, as if drawn by fantastic fountain pens in horizontal lines and dashes. The upper edge of the sunrise was yellow and it descended to the horizon in deepening shades of orange.

Kevin Hackenberg awoke around 0605 to view the end of the sunrise spectacle. Equally impressed with our vantage point, he attempted to capture the moment on film. It would take far bigger lens to do justice to this vision.

As the low clouds began to break up in mid-morning, Brian Lamplough flew back into the pad. The natives had promised to cut additional pads at other supposed wrecksites. Due to an impending fuel shortage, Brian advised that we would be better served by cursorily investigating each of these sites to determine their merit, leaving it to CIL-HI to identify the remains.

We shut down the Hughes in Zawan and I paid off the men. I had already given them 100 kina towards cutting the P-47 Pad out of a promised 200 kina. I paid the other 100k plus 20 kina per man for the six men who had accompanied us to the B-25 site.

I questioned Manase about the other four sites. We eventually came to understand that the men who cut the sites were really from the nearby village of Bambu.

We departed on the five-minute flight to Bambu and shortly flew over a lovely, widespread village of large rectangular thatched huts. Lacking chimneys, smoke seeped out of the porous thatched ridges of each hut, giving the impression that each edifice was steaming in the morning air.

We touched down in a large field in the center of the village. People streamed to the chopper from all directions. From the air they looked like flocks of ants racing to their anthill in choreographed precision.

Astounded by the sheer numbers of people, I wondered how many people managed to live in a single hut. Each building would have to hold several large families.

After a long talk with the assembled men, we selected one man called Hetaningice, who appeared to be the leader. He climbed into the front middle seat of the chopper and was clearly terrified by the prospect of his first flight.

His English was too rudimentary for effective communication and we resorted to finger pointing for directions. His finger led us to the village of Yaut. A pad near a waterfall had been cut by the river but the diameter was too small to admit the chopper's rotating blades.

Brian Lamplough set down in a garden in Yaut, and shut down the chopper at 3,500'. We were led down a nominally steep path to the river and headed upstream. We leapt from rock to rock continually crossing and re-crossing the stream. Despite my best efforts, I still managed to drop one boot squarely into the creek, filling it with cold water.

Kevin gave up and just plodded along in the current, his boots sloshing sadly. Our guide abruptly turned into the jungle and took us to a small four-cylinder engine. A tiny undercarriage strut and wheel lay nearby. Suspecting that this was possibly a civil air wreck, I inquired as to when it had crashed. I was assured that it had crashed during the war. The men went on to describe how it had exploded and burnt the pilot to death.

I assured them it must have been a small piper cub, an L-4 or L-5 used for observation or rescuing downed fliers from short kunai clearings. There was no serial number on the engine. The rest of the plane's structure had apparently been scrapped by the villagers. There was no evidence of wreckage except for the engine and the wheel rim. We decided to note the location and move on to the next site. Brian had followed us down the hill.

Climbing back up was exhausting. My legs were sore from the abuses heaped upon them over the course of the preceding days. Upon returning to the chopper, Brian informed me that he had no intention of walking into any further wreck sites.

We noticed a tail wheel of the cub gracing a Yaut garden. It had been stuck in the ground upside down for what appeared to be purely decorative purposes.

After buying a load of sweet potatoes from the locals, we departed for the next site. This pad had also been cut too small and we landed at the closest village, about an hour's walk from the pad. The natives here seemed more primitive. No one spoke English and a number of men wore nothing but loincloths and necklaces of boars' teeth.

While at the Tucson reunion **FRANKLIN "JACK" "DUSTY" RHODES**, 65th Pilot from Bakersfield, CA, handed **SAM COMMONS** a copy of a letter sent to his mother on September 13, 1944 as well as a story written by war correspondent, Lee Van Atta.

The letter from Los Angeles Soap Company to Mrs. F. A. Rhodes, who resided in Bakersfield at that time, cites the fact that a Sept. 4th newscast by Bob Anderson mentioned her son as one of two California fliers taking part in recent air raids on Davao, Philippines. The other was Lt. Paul Hanson [CO of the 65th at Clark Field]. The raid was the first of those made on the target in order to soften it up for an actual invasion to follow later. The letter goes on to tell Mrs. Rhodes that the story was taken from a detailed report by an eye witness, but that air time limited the radio coverage of the story. So the writer of the letter, E. M. Finehout, Vice President of Los Angeles Soap Company included the entire report by Lee Van Atta.

SAM was the Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner on the lead plane for that mission and **DUSTY** was the Copilot in their B-24J 776. Lee Van Atta rode along as a war correspondent in search of a story. The pilot was Capt. **WHITE** and the Group CO, Col. **H. J. HAWTHORNE** was also in their 65th Squadron plane on Sept. 1, 1944. **SAM** says that he had seen **DUSTY** only once again after that mission and before the reunion. It was a couple of days later for a crew picture. The photo shows 7 members of that crew including **DUSTY** and **SAM**. The other 5 are: **JACK BARSKY**, Tail Gunner; **MAX ZACHEM**, Radio Operator/Belly Gunner; **CARL REDINOUR**, Asst. Flight Engineer/Waist Gunner; Capt. **WHITE**; and **ROBERT LEIBNER**, Navigator and currently from Chattanooga, TN.

Lee Van Atta's story is quoted in its entirety.

International News Service Staff Correspondent with the U. S. Fifth Air Force, somewhere in Dutch New Guinea, September 1.

The first Americans to raid the enemy-held Philippines by daylight since Corregidor fell before the Jap onslaught two years ago last May bombed the Davao area at noon today. Objectives of the powerful raid were the Matina and Lacitan Airdromes, key defensive airfields for the Southern Philippines.

The American striking force unleashed more than 100 tons of deadly, free-falling fragmentation bombs against those vital enemy-held strips during the attack. Photographs of the strike, which we viewed a few minutes ago after the return from Mindanao, confirm our original impression: seldom, if ever, have Lt. Gen. George C. Kenney's airmen done a finer overall job of saturation bombardment.

Gen. MacArthur's Headquarters, announcing the raid-heaviest against the Jap-held Philippines--said three main airdromes in the Davao area were hit with some 110 tons of high explosives. However, INS war correspondent Van Atta flew with a force that apparently concentrated on but the two-named airstrips.

Seemingly from our position in the lead Liberator at the van of the whole striking force, and from photographs themselves, not a single yard of either airdrome, and that included revetments, dispersal areas and other ground installations, escaped the extensive bombing which featured a veritable hail of explosives.

The whole daring mission, which was one of the longest in heavy bombardment history in the Southwest Pacific--was drama-packed. We fought, or rather just charged, our way through thunderheads towering as high as 17,000 feet, and then dropped lower to forge through storm-laden skies at the entrance to Davao Harbor. The American formations struck and retreated from the enemy fighter-packed stronghold without a single fighter plane covering us. We battled determined and dangerous Zero and Tony fighters in a running, 40-minute encounter after dropping our bombs.

Finally, we lost the foe in weather which unexpectedly became the friendliest thing on, or above, the earth at that particular moment. But it was the drama in our big Liberator which was most impressive of all.

At 13,000 feet, we were racing up Davao Harbor when from the obscuring clouds the town of Davao and the adjacent airstrips emerged. A colonel from San Antonio, Tex. who was command pilot of the striking formations and a veteran Southwest Pacific air ace--took a deep and audible sigh.

Our plane's primary target was the Lacitan Airstrip and, as we swung parallel to Simal Island, the colonel gave the order to our left echelons to swing off and strike at Matina which is just outside the Davao Township.

The colonel unhooked his microphone and ear-phones, and moved to the tail of the plane where we could hear him instructing the units as they roared in for the opening bombardment. This correspondent was in the cockpit between quite-capable Liberator veteran Capt. Frank White of Bellsbrook, Ohio, and Co-Pilot Lt. Frank Dusty Rhodes of Bakersfield, Calif.

Silhouetted against billowing, white clouds above the target, we saw burst after burst of heavy ack-ack forming a pattern of Black Death in a line with both targets. The bombardment units which the colonel had directed against Matina took a bad pounding.

We saw one Liberator go down in flames while another followed it seconds later. Nearly every aircraft of that particular formation was shot into sieve condition. White, who was slumped in a relaxed position in the cockpit, heard the signal from Stinson--bombs away.

I looked to our right wingman to see Maj. Harry Staley, veteran heavy-bombing ace from the early days in New Guinea, unloading his clusters in nearly-perfect unison with ours. Staley hails from Geneseo, N. Y. Then White ordered me back to the bomb-bay catwalk, where I watched thousands of additional missiles tear into the Nips. It was precision bombing of an unbeatable quality--not only ours, but every flight which took their cue from Stinson's calculating eye. Meanwhile, on our left, I could see other formations hammering at Matina.

The above account parallels the account produced in an earlier edition of this Newsletter and taken from the diary of SAM COMMONS. Unfortunately, Gen. Kenney's book states that no fighter opposition was encountered on this particular mission. Much about this air raid is now included on our web site.

DIARY OF COBER'S CREW FROM TIME OF OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENT UNTIL RETURN Part 2

Dec. 13, 1943 Preparations are underway to invade New Britain at Cap Gloucester but a diversionary landing will be made at Arawe. Today we bombed Gasmata and about ten Zeros hit the 403rd. Two P-38s were after a Zeke and while evading the P-38s the Zeke flew near our tail gunner and Pedro shot him down. The P-38s followed the Zeke down and their mission report confirmed the kill for Pedro.

- Dec. 19 Flew the equator recco today, past Manus, 3° N over to Truk nearly to Rabaul by Gloucester and back to Dobo. Near the equator we have these small tropical weather fronts extending east and west but move north and south. Flying north or south some days we run into one about once an hour. They vary but may be ten miles wide. It is best to fly under them if no land is near. You can fly right down on the deck 50-100 feet and avoid that nasty turbulence you would get at 6,000-8,000 feet which is our normal recco surveillance altitude. Flying down as close to the water as is safe, all we experience is a brisk rain shower. With the wind blowing the white caps the pilot has a good visual reference. Today we came out of the shower into the sunshine there a mile dead ahead was a Jap sub. Art Pipener, our bombardier, called over intercom, "Can I bomb her?" One of the 43rd group's planes had bombed and nearly sank one of our own subs just last week at night so headquarters had just notified us no more sub bombing since they are hard to identify. We, however, had no trouble in identification since we flew right over the sub at less than 500 feet and the rising sun emblem was clearly visible as we flew over her with her deck barely awash at the beginning of her dive.
- Dec. 21 Bombed Gloucester area from 12 PM to 3 AM with 100 lb. bombs, dropping one or two every ten minutes to keep them awake for our 2 1/2 hour turn over the target area. We have all the bottles we could find taped together in pairs "end for end" to make whistling noises on the way down. We saw the bombs from a Jap bomber hit Arawe 50 miles southeast of Gloucester where our troops had made a diversionary landing. Then our anti-aircraft returned fire. About 5-10 minutes later Tark and I felt a vibration and I yanked back on the wheel and felt a real strong prop wash. With only two planes in the area we nearly collided in the pitch-black night.
- Dec. 24 Bombed Cape Gloucester twice today first takeoff at daylight 6:30 AM, and the second at 2:00 PM.
- Dec. 26 Today our marines invaded Cape Gloucester after we bombed the landing area. The naval warships were bombarding the landing area and I understand two carriers are bombing Rabaul and Kavieng, New Ireland. A few Jap planes got through our fighters and sank two destroyers and several cargo ships.
- There in the strait off Cape Gloucester were the most ships I have ever seen at one time. As soon as we bombed, we saw the Marine's landing craft moving in for the landing.
- Dec. 29 Our crew now has flown 25 missions. Today we bombed Gloucester, inland two or three miles south of the airstrip where our Marines ran into some Jap strong points. We hit an ammo dump and a nice big brown cloud billowed up. The active volcano several miles to the south is sending up its normal vapor plume. During the last of November and through most of December it rained nearly every day but the weather has been much better this week. Christmas has been different this year with the extra flying connected with the Cape Gloucester landing, we would hardly have know it was Christmas week.
- Jan. 01 Bombed Saidor today. Much naval activity in Oro Bay area, there will be a relatively small
1944 landing tomorrow. We need a landing strip on the north side of New Guinea for the times that weather socks in our home bases.

- Jan. 03 Bombed Alexhaven today and were intercepted by a few Zeros but didn't get hit.
- Jan. 04 Took photos of Manus Island on the north leg of the equator recco.
- Jan. 11-14 Flew an old B-24 to Charter Towers, then flew copilot in a B-26 back to Townsville, where we got a new B-24J to bring back to Dobo. We also found a few cases of liquid refreshment. Liquor has a high trade or sale value here. We bought it at a pound a bottle and it has a resale value of five pounds to the army units around us. We also bought 8,000 pounds of mail along back with us from Australia.
 Today, January 14, nine officers made 1st Lieutenant and are feeling good tonight - (better than tomorrow morning).
 Each time we fly to Townsville we pass over a portion of the Great Barrier Reef. It sure is an impressive bit of nature's handiwork. Some of the loosely connected reefs are above water and are little islands most of the time; while other parts of the reef are just under water with the surf breaking over them.
 We received some of our Christmas packages before Christmas and a rumor was making the rounds that the Japs sank the mail and Christmas package boat, but this past week some belated packages arrived. Cookies and candy took quite a beating on the long hot trip.
- Jan. 17 As Lt. Everett Lind was putting on his tennis shoes the other day to play a game of softball, he forgot to shake out the dirt, etc., and he let out a real war whoop when a scorpion nailed his big toe. He hobbled around for a week with the front half of the shoe cut away for his "big" big toe.
 Bombed AA positions at Hansa Bay (Nubia). Major "Chuk" Donner, our CO, just received his "back to the States" orders. Major Wilson will be our next CO.
- Jan. 23 Bombed Wewak today and the Japs put up the most fighters since Rabaul. At least 50 attacked our group and since our plane was leading the last element over the target, it seemed half of the Zeros made a final run on our 3 planes. Tark and Kook each got credit for a kill.
- Jan. 25 Due to bomb Wewak but weather forced us to bomb the alternate target at Hansa Bay.
- Jan. 26 Art Pipener and Stan Tulig, along with other navigators and bombardiers made 1st Lt. today and I anticipate a lot of celebration by the amount of activity and noise from the neighboring tents and the numerous interruptions I am having. This is Saturday night and we aren't flying tomorrow.
- Jan. 27 Am finishing the letter to Carolyn I started last night. Nearly everyone is slow getting up this morning and I have the place to myself. The other three will be grouchy so best they stay in bed.
 I have a couple of details I have been assigned and this seems a good time to check the squadron parachutes, life vests, and oxygen equipment to see if my last week's suggestions have been carried out.
 Last night at a squadron meeting our CO threatened us (with everything in the book) for the next ones who overstay their leave as many have been doing.
- Jan. 28 Our crew went on leave today and we were flown to Moresby then next day to Townsville. The crew separated and our C-47 ended up in the little town of Marysville (?) half way to Sidney. February 1st and the field is still socked in, ceiling zero.

We have seen all the shows in town, filled up on milk shakes, caught up on sleep, and gotten in touch with civilization. The weather is nice and comfortable even though a little damp.

- Feb. 1 Today we finally flew to Sidney. Now after I pick up my ration coupons, I can do some shopping. Lt. Fay's crew and ours went down to the amusement park via the ferryboat and rode all the rides like kids. We have a room at the hotel run by the Red Cross. So many crews are on leave that it is quite crowded. We just ran into a Lt. who used to be on Fay's crew. He had been hit badly and has been patched up and has a few days before being shipped back to the States, so he is showing us around town.
- Feb. 8 This is our last night before going back to New Guinea, but I am ready to fly again. My poor feet - I hadn't worn anything but regular high cut GI shoes for months and I had to get used to my oxfords. Of course we have done a lot more walking than usual.
- Feb. 12 We finally got back over the mountains from Moresby and "home" to Dobo yesterday. I guess we are spoiled usually flying our own plane. It is fairly easy to get north to Moresby but sometimes it is hard to find a ride over the mountains to Dobo. On our way back from our R&R, every time we stopped from Brisbane north we got soaked, at least 4 or 5 times, and it wasn't so hot flying over the Owen Stanley range at 15,000 feet in wet clothes. The squadron had been working Wewak and Kavieng over while we were on leave. Our mission to Kavieng, New Ireland, was called off this morning due to weather. I did my weekly wash and the wash line was full before I had all my accumulated dirty clothes washed. Haircuts are hard to get here, but I found a GI in another squadron who has a clipper and scissors so I am able to keep from getting too shaggy. Got two months pay today and sent most of it home. I got another Christmas package today, so I guess the Japs didn't sink that mail boat after all. Most of the crew has 220 combat hours. The skeleton crew, four of us, has a lot of cargo hours but they don't count as combat time.
- Feb. 13 Bombed Kavieng airstrip today - good weather with moderate Ack Ack and no interception..
- Feb. 15 Headed for Kavieng. Bad gas siphon - one gas cap not properly seated. Gas leaks always scare me, especially since the gas streams right back over the wing above the superchargers, so we aborted the mission. Reported we lost many B-25s today. Japs had gun towers about 30 feet high and seemed to be ready for our B-25s when they made their low level strafing run. Our "Black Cat" Catalinas picked up many crews, some within the harbor until the load was so heavy they had to taxi outside the harbor and transfer people before being able to take off.
- Feb. 16 Bombed Kavieng (35th mission) - weather better, today hit target.
- Feb. 17 Kavieng-cloud covered; bombed alternate target at Tallasea runway. Jim is now doing more flying - nearly 50-50. This is especially desirable since he is scheduled to check out as first pilot soon. I am still getting Christmas packages - 4 in the last 10 days.

- Feb. 20 Scheduled to bomb Hansa Bay but bombed alternate Alexishafen due to cloud cover. Only Ack Ack at Hansa Bay.
- Feb. 22 Scheduled for Momote, bombed alternate target Rein Bay (Borgan Bay) supply and gasoline storage.
- Feb. 24 To bomb Momote. 90th Group in lead tried to go over the thunderhead, but turned back and tried to bomb the alternate target Alexishafen. Finally brought bombs back.
- Feb. 26 Scheduled for Momote, tried to go over the top again. Invasion scheduled for Momote tomorrow.
- Feb. 27 North of equator recco 12:10 hours - took off at first light and landed at dark - stretched to limit. The gas tanks were not full as we were told. We had 1 1/2 hours less gas than we were supposed to have had. We had about ten minutes of gas left on landing.

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

The doctor approached his patient in the recovery room to see how the patient was doing. As they began to talk, the doctor said that he had good news and bad news. The patient said give me the bad news first. "Well, I amputated the wrong leg." The patient was quite set back, but asked what possible good news could there be after that? The doctor replied, "You're going to be a millionaire."

John and Frank had been playing golf together for decades and they were well up in their years. One day they agreed that whichever one died first would make every effort to come back and tell his partner if there was golf in heaven.

John died one day and Frank more or less forgot about the vow. After several months had gone by, Frank sat up in bed one night as he thought that he saw something at the foot of the bed. He seemed to sight an apparition. He said, "John is that you?" A voice replied, "Yes, and I have come back to tell you about golf in heaven as I promised I would. There is good news and there is bad news." Frank asked, "First, what's the good news?"

"There is golf in heaven on the most beautiful courses you could imagine. The greens are like velvet. You can play all that you want and there is never a bag line."

Frank remarked, "After that news, what could be bad?"

"The bad news is that you are scheduled to tee off at 8:30 this morning."

Mary and Ralph were killed in an auto accident. They arrived in heaven and were greeted by St. Peter. Ralph immediately asked St. Peter if there was golf in heaven. The reply was, "There certainly is." Then St. Peter took them to a golf course and showed it to them. It was gorgeous just like the description in the humor above. St. Peter pointed to a lovely condominium along side the 7th hole and said that was to be their home. Ralph was in ecstasy. He turned to his wife, Mary, and said, "You and that health food kick and the low cholesterol diet. Without that, I could have been here 10 years ago."



The two photos above are copies of photos sent to the editor. It is apparent that the 43rd had two aircraft with the same name and somewhat similar nose art, but they are not the same. The lettering is not the same in both photos. The one at the left may be from the 64th Squadron. The other seems to be from the 403rd Squadron. Any information to help resolve this apparent dilemma would be appreciated.

The secretary/editor wishes to thank each of you who sent him a Christmas card. That thoughtful gesture is very much appreciated.

KEN KRUSE *CK*

Respectively Submitted – Jim Cherkauer, Secretary/Editor

The Newsletter is published 4 times each year – January, April, July and October. If you have any news which you want in the Newsletter, please have it in the editor's hands absolutely no later than the 15th of the month before publication. Late arriving material will be included in the following Newsletter. Please write legibly. Dues (\$15 Per Year or \$100 Life) may be sent directly to BILL WILSON, Treasurer, or to JIM CHERKAUER, Secretary. (Addresses are at the beginning of the Newsletter.) Make the check out to 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, please send BILL WILSON, Treasurer, this change as soon as possible.

REUNION INFORMATION

San Antonio, TX 28 Aug. - 3 Sept. 2000

Herein is the initial data in regard to our forthcoming reunion. Please remember that attendance has significant impact as to the cost of most functions. Our attendance at Tucson was above average, which reduced the individual costs resulting in a reunion that was "the most for the money" that we have ever had. The low room rates and the many gratuities provided by the hotel were most exceptional!

Tours are elective and therefore if there's insufficient participation, that tour will not be conducted. Please express your tour interests as soon as possible in order that reservations for transportation, etc., can be made. In turn, if you have any special area of interest in the myriad of things to see or do in San Antonio, let us know and if enough folks are interested, we will try to work it into the schedule. There are about four and a half million visitors each year to S. A - one of America's most unique cities. Our reunion hotel, the Hyatt Regency, is located right alongside the river and is within walking distance of many attractions, e.g., the Plaza, the Alamo, the Wax Museum, fine Mexican restaurants, etc.

Now! Mark the dates on your calendar; take care of your Cayuse or other transportation; locate your Stetson and bandana; c'mon down to south Texas and enjoy!!! Bring your friends, grandchildren, et al. We will have room for y'all.

Maps, driving directions to the Hyatt, recreational vehicle (RV) parks and any other relevant information will be included in subsequent newsletters. Again, should you have any special requests, please let us know.

Your San Antonio hosts: *Max & Margaret Axelsen*

8406 Dorsetshire St., San Antonio, TX 78250 (210) 681-4581

THE YEAR 2000! Reunion of the 43rd Bomb Group Assoc.

At the magnificent Hyatt Regency Hotel - San Antonio, Texas

28 August - 3 September 2000

It is a pleasure to welcome y'all back to San Antonio! Everyone enjoyed our facility, the Hyatt, in 1994 so we are billeted there again for this "Hoedown."

Put a shine on your boots or dancing shoes; grab your Stetson & bandana; saddle up; come and enjoy!!

Registration: Monday to Saturday. 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Chula Vista Foyer

Hospitality room: Open hours the same as registration.

Chula Vista Foyer

Wednesday, 30 Aug. and Thurs., 31 Aug. tours. See attached information.

Wednesday, 30 Aug. Board of Directors meeting. 8:00 PM

Pecan Room

Thursday, 31 Aug. Golf day. Golfers meet in lobby at 8:00 AM

8:00 PM Squadron meetings.

63rd - Blanco Room

64th - Llano Room

65th - Pecos Room

403rd - Directors Room

HQ. Sqdn. - Pecos Room

8:00 PM - Ladies program. Live Oak Room

Friday, 1 Sept.

6:30 AM - 8:00 AM. Continental breakfast. Rio Grande Room

8:00 AM - Depart for Lackland AFB, view graduation parade, tour of base, visit Kelley AFB, view special aircraft and then to lunch at the Kelly Officer's Club.

5:00 PM - till? Cocktail party, dinner and entertainment. To be held at the Randolph AFB Officer's Club...located on the most beautiful AFB in our country. Country/Western (casual dress).

Saturday, 2 Sept.

7:30 AM - 9:00 AM. Breakfast buffet. Rio Grande Ballroom

9:30 AM - 12:00 Noon Group meeting. Regency West room

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM Cocktail hour. Regency East room

6:30 PM - 10 PM Banquet Dinner & Dance. Regency East room

Sunday, 3 Sept.

8:30 AM - Memorial service. Regency West room

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Farewell brunch. Rio Grand Ballroom



San Antonio
Convention
& Visitors Bureau

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Revised May 17, 1999

SAN ANTONIO FOR KIDS FACT SHEET

San Antonio is a destination filled with things to see and do for everyone — no matter what the age!

With more than 300 days of annual sunshine, and an average temperature of 68.8 degrees Fahrenheit, visitors can rest assured that Mother Nature will not rain on their parade. Conveniently located near the south central tip of Texas, San Antonio is located halfway between both East and West coasts of the United States. As the eighth largest city in the United States, it has good airline and highway access.

The list below outlines some of the numerous activities and attractions that can be enjoyed by families with children young and old, no matter what the budget mandates.

DOWNTOWN

The Alamo – Where Texas defenders fell to Mexican General Santa Anna and the phrase "Remember the Alamo" originated. The Alamo is the cradle of Texas liberty and the state's most popular historic site. FREE. Call 210/225-1391.

San Antonio Central Library (Children's Floor) – Story telling, sing-alongs, puppet shows, and crafts are just a few of the activities featured Tuesday through Sunday at this new state-of-the-art facility. Other events are planned monthly. FREE. Call 210/207-2500.

Hertzberg Circus Museum – This museum contains one of the largest assortments of Circusana in the world. Visitors will find an extensive Tom Thumb collection, rare circus lithographs and engravings, autographed photos of Big Top stars, as well as a portion of the P.T. Barnum collection. Tickets are \$2.50, \$2.00 for seniors and \$1.00 for children ages 3-12. Admission is free on Tuesdays. Call 210/207-7810.

San Antonio Children's Museum – The museum allows children the opportunity to gain a better understanding of San Antonio's history through play with interactive exhibits and workshops. Teachers and children up to 2 years old are free; all other tickets are \$4.00. Call 210/212-4453.

HemisFair Park – Site of HemisFair, the 1968 World's Fair held in San Antonio, this park is conveniently located downtown and near the River Walk. The beautifully landscaped area includes the following attractions:

Institute of Texan Cultures – Discover the many different ethnic groups that have created a population as diverse as the Texas landscape. Affiliated with the University of Texas, education is its primary focus, but the displays make learning fun. Admission is \$4.00 (ages 12-64), \$2.00 (ages 3-11, 65+), and free for ages 2 and under. Call 210/458-2300.

Tower of the Americas – Experience an inspiring view of San Antonio from 579 feet above ground! The tower's observation level contains 8 panoramic panels and an outdoor walkway 59 floors above the city. Elevator fees are \$3.00 for adults; \$2.00 for senior adults 55 and older; \$1.00 for children ages 4-12; and free for children under 4. Call 210/223-3101.

Downtown All-Around Playground – Built entirely through volunteer efforts, the park contains a massive wooden play area, space tunnel and castle, tot castle and tire tunnel. Kids can release active energy while parents enjoy the cool shade of the park's picnic gazebo. FREE

River Walk – Constructed along the banks of the San Antonio River, the River Walk winds its way for 2 1/2 miles. Stroll along the landscaped walkways, specialty shops and restaurants. Instead of walking, take a Yanaguana Cruise, where tour guides explain the history of San Antonio's beloved river. Tickets are \$5.25 for adults; \$3.65 for seniors and military; and \$1.00 for children. Call 210/244-5700 or 800/417-4139.

Texas Adventure – Go back in time with this state-of-the-art multi-media story of Texas independence and history of the Alamo. The show is so real, visitors feel as if they're really a part of history in the making. Tickets are \$7.50 for adults, \$5.90 for seniors and military, and \$4.50 for children ages 3-11. Group discounts are available. Call 210/227-8224.

IMAX Theatre – Become the centerpiece of the hourly adventures offered daily. See "Alamo...the Price of Freedom," "Special Effects" or "Titanica" on six-story tall screens, complimented by six-track stereo sound. Tickets are \$7.50 (12 and older), \$6.75 for seniors, and \$4.75 (3 to 11, or for any child under 3 requiring a seat). Call 210/225-4629.

La Villita Historic District – Wander along the cobblestone streets of early San Antonio to see artisans such as glass blowers and weavers at work. Galleries, shops and eateries fill restored buildings with collectibles of all prices in this National Register District. FREE. Call 210/207-8610.

Market Square – This is the largest Mexican market outside of Mexico. In addition to myriads of shops bursting with unique and colorful imports, there are weekend fiestas, mariachi serenades, an art gallery and a restaurant/bakery open 24-hours a day. Kids can choose their own birthday piñata to take back home for their party. FREE. Call 210/207-8600.

VIA San Antonio Streetcars – Just 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children (5-11) is all it takes to ride nearly anywhere in the downtown area over four different routes. Frequent stops make sight-seeing and shopping a breeze. Call 210/362-2020.

Milam Park – Turrets, tunnels and a wrought iron gazebo are just some of the fun things to explore here. Brightly colored new playground equipment will entertain youngsters while adults shop across the street at Market Square. FREE.

Plaza Theatre of Wax and Ripley's Believe It or Not! – Plaza Theatre of Wax houses more than 225 lifelike characters in four themed sections – Hollywood, Horror, History and Religion. Ripley's Believe It or Not! has more than 600 unique curiosities from around the world. Both attractions are conveniently located

Brackenridge Eagle Miniature Train – Enjoy riding the new locomotive as it takes visitors nearly two miles around the park and back. The train passes by the zoo, Witte Museum, stables and carousel. Tickets are \$2.25 for adults; and \$1.75 for children under 12. Call 210/736-9534.

Carousel – Children of all ages will love riding this – complete with wooden horses and music! Tickets are \$2.25 for adults; and \$1.75 for children under 12 and active military. Call 210/736-9534.

Skyride – Get airborne for a scenic view of Brackenridge Park and the San Antonio skyline aboard a gondola that runs between the Japanese Tea Garden and San Antonio Zoo. Tickets are \$2.25 for adults; and \$1.75 for children ages 1-11. Call 210/736-9534.

Kiddie Park – At America's oldest and original Kiddie Park, children can enjoy the antique, hand-carved Merry-Go-Round, "Little Dipper" roller coaster, Ferris Wheel and much, much more – like a game room with pin ball, Skee-ball and video games. Individual ticket prices start from 35 cents, and unlimited rides are \$5.95. Call 210/824-4351.

San Antonio Botanical Gardens – Follow your senses through the San Antonio Botanical Gardens, where acres of beautiful, lush vegetation replicate three distinct landscape regions of the state. Wander through formal gardens, aquatic gardens and more. There is even a special garden for the blind, where emphasis is placed upon the touch and scent of flowers and plants. Tickets are \$3.00 for adults; \$1.50 for seniors; and \$1.00 for children 3-13. Tickets for children under 3 are free. Call 210/207-3250.

Jungle Jim's Playland – This indoor children's entertainment center offers child-size rides, a soft playground and a multitude of games, complete with well-trained Jungle Guides to supervise. Individual rides are 75 cents. General passes are \$5.99 weekdays and \$6.99 on weekends. Call 210/490-8595.

Discovery Zone – Kids will love the Discovery Zone Fun Center! Designed to promote non-competitive fun in a safe, indoor play environment, this is a colorful indoor obstacle course. General admission is free for children under 12 months; \$4.99 for children 12-36 months; and \$6.99 for children ages 4-12. Call 210/681-3232 or 210/494-1226.

Malibu Grand Prix – The grand prix style tracks are designed so all ages can experience the thrill of driving a race car. A video gameroom, miniature golf course and electronic batting cage add to the fun. Laps are \$2.60 - \$3.75, golf is \$3.00 - \$5.95, and bumper boats are \$4.00 a session. Call 210/341-2500.

Nelson W. Wolff Municipal Baseball Stadium – There is great summertime nostalgic family entertainment at this home of the San Antonio Missions. Enjoy a game with all the trimmings, like hot dogs and popcorn. Adult tickets are \$4.50, children ages 3 to 12 are \$2.50 and children under 2 are free. Call 210/675-7275.

Splashtown Water Park – This water park offers 18 landscaped acres of "ahh." From Kids Kove to a lazy float ride down the Siesta del Rio to the futuristic Starflight, Splashtown offers fun "cool!" Tickets are \$19.99 for general admission and \$14.99 for children under 4 feet tall. Admission after 5 p.m. is \$11.99. Seniors over 65 and toddlers under two are free. Call 210/227-1100.

Texas Transportation Museum – Antique pedicabs, horse drawn and gas powered vehicles, plus locomotives abound at this museum. Train rides are offered Sunday afternoons from 12:30-3:30 p.m. Tickets are \$4.00 for adults and \$2.00 for children 12 and under. Call 210/490-3554.

within the same building. Single attraction tickets are \$8.95 for adults and \$4.95 for children ages 4-12. For both attractions, tickets are \$12.95 for adults and \$7.95 for children ages 4-12. Call 210/224-9299.

Magik Children's Theatre – San Antonio's family professional theatre is in the heart of the city's growing downtown arts district. Its goal is to introduce children to the wonderful world of arts. With live performances of popular, enchanting fairy tales and its "Phantom of the Alamo," the Magik Children's Theatre provides an excellent setting for parents and children to spend quality time together. Tickets are \$7.00 for adults, \$5.50 for children, and \$2.00 for children 3 and under. Call 210/227-2751.

Alamodome – Home of the NBA's San Antonio Spurs, the Alamodome is a spectacular, state-of-the-art sports and entertainment facility. Kids can check out professional football, basketball, soccer and skating events. Ticket prices are dependent upon each sporting event. Guided walking tours are conducted Tuesday through Saturday at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Prices are \$3.00 (ages 13-64) and \$1.50 (ages up to 12 and 65 and over). Call 210/207-3652.

AROUND TOWN

SeaWorld San Antonio – The world's largest marine life theme park, it has more than 25 shows, educational exhibits and rides. SeaWorld San Antonio combines fun with education and appreciation for their aquatic mammals. Tickets are \$31.95 for adults; \$21.95 for children ages 3-11; and senior adults receive \$3.00 off the price of an adult ticket (all prices plus tax). Call 210/523-3611.

Six Flags Fiesta Texas – The town built just for fun, Six Flags Fiesta Texas has more than 20 rides, live performances, plus a laser and fireworks extravaganza. Its four theme areas celebrate Texas' diverse cultural heritage. Tickets are \$32.31 for adults 48 inches and over, \$16.15 for persons under 48 inches, and \$21.54 for seniors 55 years and older and those who are physically challenged. The park is free for children 2 and younger. Call 210/697-5050.

Quadrangle at Fort Sam Houston – Home of Headquarters, Fifth U.S. Army, this historical landmark was originally built as a supply depot for posts and units in the region. It is now home to a petting "zoo" of tame uncaged deer, rabbits and peacocks. FREE. Call 210/221-1886.

Brackenridge Park – This 343-acre park encompasses a multitude of delightful activities to enjoy:

San Antonio Zoo – A collection of more than 3,000 animals from around the world are displayed in natural habitats. Feedings, demonstrations, a children's zoo and boat ride provide an educational, fun-filled outing. Tickets are \$7.00 for adults; \$5.00 for seniors and children ages 3-11; and free for children under 3. Call 210/734-7183.

Witte Museum – This natural history museum illustrates the ecological diversity found throughout the state of Texas. There is an Ecolab of live Texas animals and an outdoor butterfly and hummingbird museum. The new H-E-B Science Treehouse offers a magical world of inventions and zany contraptions. Tickets are \$5.95 for ages 12-64, \$4.95 for seniors 65 years and over, \$3.95 for children ages 4-11 and free for children 3 and under. Call 210/357-1900.

Japanese Tea Gardens – This serene outdoor setting, once a limestone quarry, lets parents relax amidst beautiful floral plantings, while kids climb winding stairways and watch giant goldfish in their ponds from stone bridges and pebble walkways. FREE. Call 210/734-0816.

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park – After visiting the Alamo downtown, continue along Mission Trail Parkway to see four more missions that are also active parish churches. Each is representative of Spanish colonization efforts in North America and has different interpretive themes relative to this period. Start at the visitor center at Mission San Jose. Free. Call 210/229-5701.

A SHORT DRIVE BEYOND TOWN

Natural Bridge Caverns – This live cavern is just north of San Antonio. Water can still be seen dripping from colorful formations formed from limestone more than 140,000,000 years ago. Guided tours are provided along safely paved and well-lighted walkways. Tickets are \$9.00 for adults; and \$6.00 for children ages 4-12. Call 210/651-6101.

Natural Bridge Wildlife Ranch – Experience one-on-one encounters with exotic and native animals. Several endangered species along with newborn animals can be seen on the "safari" drive through more than 200 acres of picturesque ranchland. Tickets are \$8.25 for adults, \$5.25 for children ages 3-11 and free for children under three. Tickets for seniors ages 65 and up are \$7.25. Call 830/438-7400.

Cascade Caverns – Be sure to visit this "cool" place during the summer, as the cavern is always 68 degrees. Guided tours through fragile, crystal clear rock formations end at a 100-foot waterfall, designated as a historic site. These are offered daily from March through Labor Day, and on the weekends during the remainder of the year. Admission charged. Call 830/755-8080.

Lighthouse Ranch – Located in the Texas Hill Country, this family owned, working ranch offers a perfect escape to the great outdoors. Enjoy one-two hour, half-day, or overnight trail rides through magnificent scenery and an abundance of wildlife. One hour rides are \$21 per person; two hour rides are \$50 per person; half-day rides (with lunch) are \$85 per person; full-day rides (with lunch) are \$125, and overnight rides (with meals) are \$185 per person. Guest houses are available for overnight lodging. Call 830/510-4136.

Friedrich Wilderness Park – Enjoy unspoiled natural surroundings in the Texas Hill Country. Walk or hike through numerous trails to see preserved and protected native plants and wildlife. FREE. Call 210/698-1057.

The San Antonio Convention & Visitors Bureau, a Department of the City of San Antonio, is funded through a hotel/motel occupancy tax. The bureau is a full sales and service agency dedicated to the promotion of San Antonio as a meeting and visitor destination.