



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

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

Some time ago, I lost a close friend that I was associated with in a San Antonio Rotary Club. He was a fine person, a retired Air Force Officer that lived a full life. He was a gent that exemplified principles that all of us can admire. His personal card was one of the best I've known. It as follows:

A PRAYER FOR THE POST RETIRED

Lord thou knowest better than I know myself that I'm growing older and will some day be old. Keep me from getting talkative, and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to try to straighten out everybody's affairs. Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details - give me wings to get to the point.

I ask for grace enough to listen to tales of others' pains. Help me endure them with patience. But seal my lips on my own aches and pains - they are increasing and my love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally it is possible I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet, I do not want to be a saint - some of them are so hard to live with - but a sour old person, is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all - but Thou Knowest Lord, I want a few friends at the end.

Recently, when reviewing some records, I noted that I had paid International Research and Publishing Corp. in Oct. 1989 for the 43rd Bomb Book to be published. With the receipt was an advertisement on the 90th's book to be published in the Fall of 1990. As you know, neither that book nor the 22nd's has been published to date. The 22nd has filed suit and that case will go to court this Fall. Our Group has taken appropriate action to get our book published. We sincerely believe the outlook has improved and that we may have our book in production soon. Think positive!

Here is an article taken from the 20TH AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER FALL 1999 which may be of interest to many readers:

"KEEP YOUR CRUMMY AIR FORCE MEMORIAL AWAY FROM OUR SACRED MARINE MEMORIAL"

They are more circumspect in their choice of words, but mean the same: Marines are trying to keep the Air Force Memorial from being built in Arlington Ridge Park. Working with a local neighborhood association, Marines are asking local governmental agencies (National Capital Planning Commission, the Commission of Fine Arts, and the National Park Service)--that have approved the Arlington Ridge Park site proposed for the Air Force Memorial--*to withdraw their approval*. It matter not 1) that 52,173 AAF crewmen died in action during WW II while 19,733 Marines were killed, 2) that Arlington Ridge Park contains 25 acres, the Marines applied for two (acres) in the 1950s, then doubled it to four, then re-doubled it to eight and now say that (though most is vacant) "nothing else should be built in Arlington Ridge Park," even if, 3) in 1954, the Marine Corps War Memorial Foundation stipulated in writing that the authorization (to build a Marine War Memorial) "is (being) granted with the understanding that the Marine Corps Memorial is an element of ultimate development of the..."(entire tract)...", 4) the Netherlands Carillon occupies three acres and the proposed Air Force site requires two, and 5) that the 'superb alternate site' Marines suggest for the Air Force is *under* the Navy Annex which DOD plans to use for the next 21 years! *And some members of this Association are allowing the Marines to publicize their names as sponsors of a Marine celebration* to be held in Washington next February! Gentlemen, where is your common sense? Beware the Greeks...! As Gen. LeMay said, "we should support U.S. Airpower!" He said nothing about Seapower!

How can you SUPPORT U.S. AIRPOWER? By writing the National Capital Planning Commission (801 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 301, Wash., DC 20576), the Commission of fine Arts (The Pension Building, 441 F Street, N.W., Suite 314, Wash., DC 20001) and U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Region, (1100 Ohio Dr, S.W., Wash., DC 20242). Urge them to see that the Air Force memorial is built in Arlington Ridge Park. We have sample letters, for those needing them. 20th Air Force Assoc. (1143 Glenview Rd., Santa Barbara, CA 93108-2001). Phone & Fax (805) 969-2796.

[The editor has heard that the Air Force has since won this battle, but he has not read any official notice that this is correct.]

By now you should have received your 2000 Roster. There should be no more complaints about the size of the print. **WILLIAM H. WILSON, Jr.** and **ELAIN PIERCE**, the 43rd Elf, have done a tremendous job in compiling and publishing the new Roster. All of the information concerning the membership by squadron and by states has been reinstalled. Keeping track of all of the address changes, phone number changes, etc. is a never-ending task. Until you actually do something like this yourself, you really cannot appreciate the effort that this takes. Send your compliments to **BILL** and **ELAIN**. By all means keep them posted with changes in your addresses and phone numbers. The editor notices that there are still a number of you who have not given the association your squadron or duty while in the 43rd. Why not take care of that matter soon?

MYRON J. "JACK" RUSMISEL, 64th Bombardier from Omaha, NE, remitting his 2000-year dues also writes that he was on that mission to Kure on July 28, 1945 in which the 43rd was credited with sinking the Japanese aircraft carrier, Katsuragi a 39,000 ton ship. (See Newsletter Jul. '97 p 6, Oct. '97 p 21, Jul. '98 p 4, and Oct. '99 p 3.) "There were 3 planes over the target - the Carrier - it was docked and camouflaged with the part down the center like alfalfa. My sight locked on and dropped - almost like with the 'bug' and tower in school. The lead plane went around - could have had cameras?"

Headquarters informed MYRON that he, the lead pilot and two other bombardiers were to receive awards for their accomplishments. JACK enclosed his orders for the award of the DFC.

Second Lieutenant MYRON J. RUSMISEL, (0928161), Air Corps, United States Army. For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight over Kure bay, Japan on 28 July 1945. Lieutenant Rusmisl, bombardier, assisted in the destruction of the thirty-nine thousand (39,000) ton aircraft carrier, Katsuragi. He flew on the left wing of the first element. As the formation swung on its bomb run, it was immediately subjected to intense, heavy accurate fire from the batteries of a battleship, two carriers, several destroyers and smaller vessels, as well as shore installations. Lt. Rusmisl found the well camouflaged target in his bomb sight, and noting the course excellent, killed his own rate. Whereas the lead ship could not release his bombs, Lt. Rusmisl dropped his chain within fifty (50) feet of the left side of the carrier, causing positive damage. These and other near misses contributed to the complete destruction of the aircraft carrier. The courage and devotion to duty displayed by Lt. Rusmisl are worthy of the highest traditions of the United States Army.

BY COMMAND OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL WHITEHEAD:

CLEMENTS McMULLEN
Major General, U. S. Army
Chief of Staff.

JACK enclosed a partial listing of other men on that crew. **ELMER DAVENPORT**, Pilot, **HELMER M. JOHNSON Jr.**, Copilot from Fort Worth, TX, **CHARLES F. McCLENNY**, Flight Engineer from Dallas, TX, **FALK**, Radio Operator, **WENDELL W. JONES**, Top Gunner from Raleigh, NC, **WARREN A. DITZLER**, Ball Gunner from Lebanon, PA, and **RALPH D. GRUBB**, Tail Gunner from Pulaski, VA. He writes that McCLENNY might have been ill and absent from this mission.

In a letter along with his dues for year 2000, **WILLIAM L. JOBE**, 64th Gunner from Bremerton, WA, expressed his appreciation for the effort and time put into the Newsletter. He finds it interesting to read about those "...long-ago happenings."

WILLIAM did not make it to the Tucson reunion and regretted it as he had retired there as a Captain in 1964. He was the Base Communications Officer. They supported the 90th Missile Wing's 18 Titan II missile sites plus B-47 squadrons and a U-2 squadron.

While I was stationed there, the October 1992 Cuban missile crisis took place. "I stood 12-hour shifts in the Command Post for about ten days. We were all very concerned about what could happen - B-47's were either in the air or on runway alert and the missile crews had performed their count-downs to as near launching as possible. (Afterwards, as Crypto Officer, I had to destroy Top Secret messages we had received earlier. With my witnessing officer we, shall I say, 'scanned' some of the message before they went into the 'burn barrel' and it became even more apparent how 'close to the brink' we had come!)"

The secretary received a phone call from **ELAINE KEPPLER** for **HENRY J. BARTNICK**, Tail Gunner from Brockport, NY. **HENRY** is hearing impaired and she does a good many tasks for him including making his phone calls. **HENRY** wanted to know our web site address (URL). For everyone who uses the Internet this address is now a part of the masthead of the Newsletter. **ELAINE** said that **ARNOLD M. HUSKINS**, 65th Bombardier from Pittsfield, MA, told her to call the secretary.

EDWARD L. GAMMILL, 63rd Aircraft Maintenance from Phoenix, AZ, forwarded a card he had received from **FRANCES VANDAL**, daughter of the late **ERNIE VANDAL** (see Vol. 70 April '99). **ED** did not realize that **ERNIE** had not stayed active in our association and thus was not receiving the Newsletter. He requested that we put **FRANCES** on our mailing list. She would share the Newsletter

with her brothers. She wrote that she was sure her brothers and she would want to attend a future reunion of our association. Ed volunteered to pick up any dues in this situation.

FRANCES' address is 5430 W. 120th St., Hawthorne, CA 90250-3405.

Absent from our association for a spell, but remitting his 2000-year dues and then some is **ALBERT "HOOT" FELDBIN**, 64th Bombardier. HOOT says that he served on the crew of **KENNETH BROWN**, 64th Pilot from El Paso, TX.

He writes that he has had conflicts at the times of our past reunions so he has missed them, but it appears as though the San Antonio reunion will fit their schedule. He hopes to join us all there.

He says that their crew flew *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*, and in 1994 the Hamilton Collections issued a plate featuring this plane as a part of its "Great Fighters of WW II" series. He bought 3 of them and sent one on to KEN.

His address, etc.: 104 Mansion St., Coxsackie, NY 12051. Ph. 518-731-6996 and his e-mail address is <HOOTOWL104@AOL.COM>. He has logged into the web site and is on the Guest List.

Early in January the editor received a phone call from **S. L. FLINNER**, 63rd Pilot from Prospect, PA. He basically was interested in saying how much he appreciated all of the work and time devoted to producing the Newsletter. LARRY talked a bit about a night mission he had over Mindoro, Philippines but the editor did not take notes and can't recall any details. It was nice to receive such a friendly call.

JAMES "JIM" RODELLA, 64th Gunner from Pittsburgh, PA, sent e-mail with a number of items of interest. He expressed his sorrow for not making it to Tucson, but he hopes those who did make it had a good time.

Much to his surprise and amazement his U. S. Senator, Rick Santorum, showed up at his door one day and presented him with the Philippine Liberation Medal.

He reports that he has been in contact via e-mail with Associate member, **IAN QUINN**, from Hong Kong. IAN is still working on the history of Hong Kong during WWII. His e-mail address is <quinns@hkstar.com>.

JIM reports that Donald Nijboer from Toronto, Canada, interviewed him as DONALD is writing a book on aerial gunners. Donald has an e-mail address of <dnijboer@direct.com>.

Last August Jim and his wife, **BOOTS**, went to the Arnold Palmer Airport in Latrobe, PA, where he hoped to take a ride on the Collings Foundation B-24 J now painted to be a replica of *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. The #2 engine had blown a cylinder head and it was being repaired, so Jim did not get a ride last year. While there, a local TV station interviewed him when they learned he had his diary from WWII with him and that he had flown his last and 42nd mission in #973.

JIM writes that he lost his voice last December after having polyps removed from his vocal cords. By January 6th he still had not recovered his voice, but he thinks **BOOTS** may enjoy the quietness for a spell.

Another e-mail from **JAMES RODELLA** tells that he flew his last mission from Ie Shima on August 6, 1945 in #973 *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. Although JIM was on the crew of the late **ANGUS B. TAFF**, 64th Pilot from Tallahassee, FL, he was not flying with his crew at the time. He had been grounded at the time his crew flew its last mission. He kept no record of the pilot on this mission or the names of any of the crewmembers. The mission lasted 7 hours and 25 minutes. The target was Kagoshima, Kyushu, Japan. He writes that they dropped twelve 500-lb. incendiary bombs, encountered no fighter opposition and only moderate ack-ack. The smoke from their raid rose to about 12,000'.

Via land mail or snail mail as those who use e-mail refer to the mail delivered by the Postal Service, JIM sent in the dues for 2000 for both himself and his daughter, **JOYCE E. RODELLA** Associate member also from Pittsburgh, PA.

JIM enclosed a copy of records of all 42 of his missions from Jan. 27th, 1945, through Aug. 5, 1945.

JIM wonders how anyone could claim that #973 was virtually his own plane since they rotated crews all of the time and since some planes had a "reputation" for bad luck which may have been due to "superstition." No one pilot and crew could claim a plane as their own. JIM's e-mail address is <rodella@bellatlantic.net>.

What a coincidence! The following came sometime later in the mail, but obviously JIM RODELLA flew his last mission with the crew in the next article.

In answer to the editor's request for information about the missions of the 64th's B-24 *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL* #973, RALPH D. GRUBB, 64th Tail Gunner from Pulaski, VA, sent this information.

RALPH was on the 64th crew of ROBERT W. COOPER, Pilot from Ft. Worth, TX, ELMER DAUPERT, Copilot, HOWARD YEAGER, Navigator, JACK M. RUSMISEL, Bombardier from Omaha, NE, CHARLES F. McCLENNY, Flight Engineer from Dallas, TX, EDWARD FALK, Radio Operator, DAN TRANGELLO, Nose Gunner, WENDELL JONES, Top Gunner from Raleigh, NC, and WARREN A. DITZLER, Armament/Gunner from Lebanon, PA.

RALPH writes that while at Clark Field in July, the 43rd was not too active as it was preparing to move to Ie Shima. During this time he was detailed to hauling lumber from the docks in Manila to Subic Bay for shipment to Ie Shima aboard a LST.

He wonders if the *DRAGON* had its nose art painted sometime in July while at Clark Field. [The editor believes that is the case as he saw the plane with its famous nose art in July and maybe late June at Clark Field.]

RALPH says he was moved to Ie Shima on July 25, 1945 and believes that he did not see the plane with nose art before he arrived on Ie Shima. Once there, BOB COOPER was placed on special assignment and DAUPERT took over as the pilot of the crew.

On Aug. 6, 1945, the day RALPH says that the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, their crew was flying #973 and bombed Kagoshima, Kyushu, Japan. They encountered ack-ack and took a hit. [Editor's note. The atomic bombing of Hiroshima took place on Aug. 7, 1945, in the Far East. That was Aug. 6, 1945, in the USA. So the date is recorded as Aug. 6th in official Washington documents.]

RALPH enclosed in his letter a copy of the last page of his official flight log, August 1945. It shows that RALPH was on 4 missions to Japan: Nagasaki on August 1st in #543; Kagoshima on the 6th in #973; Iwakuni on Honshu on the 9th in #256; and Matsuyama on Shikoku on the 12th in #543. In all he had 363:45 hours of combat flying and had just reached the magic number 100 for combat points. On the Aug. 9th mission, the crew observed the mushroom shaped cloud over Nagasaki.

On our web site was a message from BARBARA MULLIGAN FOCHT, daughter of ARTHUR F. "ART" MULLIGAN, 64th Pilot from Delray Beach, FL, who reports that ART had a mild stroke on 12/28 and was recovering at the Pinecrest Rehab Center in Delray Beach, FL. He returned home on Jan. 11th BARBARA feels that ART would appreciate hearing from his friends in our association. In case you have mislaid your Roster, here is his address: 823 Par Circle, Delray Beach, FL-33445.

E-mail from NICHOLAS ARABINKO, 64th Pilot from Punta Gorda, FL, contained the same information about ART, but included the fact that NICK had talked with ART on the phone on Jan. 11th. NICK reported ART was "quite 'Perky' and truly appreciates all the calls and cards he has received. He plans to attend Reunion 2000 to thank all for their 'Get Well Wishes!' BEV too! He reminds all that there 'Just isn't Any Place Like Home Sweet Home!' "

HARLEY HAYDEN, 65th Gunner from Hannibal, MO, writes that after starting many letters to the editor in the past and not finishing or sending any of them, he has finally mailed one. He had read and enjoyed the special edition. He asks the staff to keep up the good work.

In the April '99 Newsletter he had read the item about **JANICE OLSON**, Associate member from Apple Valley, CA, and her finding and recovering crew remains from a B-17 piloted by **HOWARD EBERLY**. He was not certain to which squadron the plane belonged, but mentioned that his concern at the time of its disappearance was of the crew, as he knew several of them very well.

If the editor is reading **HARLEY**'s letter correctly, he began his first tour with the 43rd not as a gunner but as a ground service person. On Dec. 10, 1941, he and six other ground personnel were shipped back to the States to attend gunnery school in Bangor. After graduating they all chose to return to the 43rd where they took up duties as gunners.

HARLEY had believed, at first, that the plane **JANICE** found must have been that of **JOHN WOODWARD**. His plane was shot down on June 13, 1943, after receiving a direct hit from the anti aircraft over Vunakanau. Although **WOODWARD** was not from the 65th, there were 3 of **HARLEY**'s 65th buddies on that plane. He also knew the other 5 enlisted men on the plane. Two of these men had gone along just for the ride. Among those lost on that mission were **LEONARD SKAAR**, NCO in charge of the 65th Armament Shop, **PETE OWENS**, also from 65th Armament Shop and Gunner who had gone back to Bangor for gunnery school with **HARLEY**, **CHRIS COUSINS**, Ball Turret, and **ARTHUR GINGASIAN**, Tail Gunner. These latter two had also gone back to the States with **HARLEY** to attend gunnery school.

HARLEY's brother **KEN HAYDEN**, originally in 65th Tech Supply and later a Flight Engineer, visited **HARLEY** last April and confirmed that these latter men were on **WOODWARD**'s crew. **KEN** finished his tours 3 months before his brother. **HARLEY** says that the missions were coming fast and furious at the time with the new B-24s. **DOC. MILTON GUSACK**, 65th Flight Surgeon from Chevy Chase, MD Chase grounded him, after he had completed 22 missions.

Looking through old newsletters, **HARLEY** found a partial listing of **WOODWARD**'s crew. He says that **GINGASIAN** and **FERRALLO** were not listed, but **SKAAR** was listed in an old *AIR FORCE TIMES* as KIA. He says that **OWENS** went down with that crew. **SKAAR**, **GINGASIAN** and **OWENS** were honored and laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery.

Again the e-mail letters have been frequent and many to the secretary/editor. John E. Bills of Atlanta, GA, reports that his father was in the 460th Bomb Group in WWII. This got him interested in painting B-17s and B-24s. He says that he "... can recreate a perfect image of your plane with correct colors and insignia." So if any of you are interested in having a color painting of your favorite plane, please feel free to contact him at his home. His phone number is 770-346-9517. His e-mail address is <john@austinkelley.com>.

JAMES THOMPSON, Jr., 63rd Air Mechanic from Tucson, AZ, and our host for the 1999 reunion, forwarded a letter he had received from **FRANCIS J. DRAB**, 403rd Gunner from Venice, FL.

JIM says that after our reunion in Tucson, he and **LOUISE** headed north to the Sun City area to cat sit for nearly two weeks while their daughter and son-in-law went to Hawaii. He has been doing a great deal of hiking up and down the mountains around Tucson. Later this year he and some buddies will head to Nevada to hike up its tallest peak. The only snow they had by Jan. 5th was in the high mountains but even that was not enough to open the ski area.

FRANCIS J. DRAB wrote **JIM THOMPSON** in January that he was both shocked and happy when thumbing through an old issue of *AIR FORCE*, he found the 43rd Bomb Group Association was having a reunion.

FRANCIS relates that while an aerial gunner instructor at Tyndall Field in Florida he received word that his best friends in the 8th AAF had been shot up on a mission and were all killed when crash landing after returning from the mission. He immediately asked for overseas duty, and was sent to Nadzab, N. G., as an instructor.

After doing some conniving he and 3 other instructors were sent north to join combat crews, but their orders were incomplete and no one had the authority to tell them what to do. They decided to join the 5th AAF. Friends they had made in Nadzab had been in the 403rd Sqd. of the 43rd BG and had told them what a great outfit it was. So they went to the 43rd Headquarters at Clark Field and asked if they could join the group. The Group was happy to have these men join it. FRANCIS was assigned as a waist gunner/armorer in the 403rd to a crew piloted by Lt. ART HUMPFREY. They flew together until the war ended.

FRANCIS says that he has some interesting stories to tell. One is how their mission was to bomb Hiroshima but no one had briefed them that the atom bomb had been dropped there earlier. He recalls the typhoon that hit Ie Shima and destroyed nearly every tent on the island. He wants to hear about "The Mareeba Butchers."

An introductory letter and application to join the association has been mailed to FRANCIS.

The 19th Bombardment Association is holding its annual reunion at the Hanalei Hotel in San Diego on 7-11 May 2000. The hotel cutoff date for reservations at \$85.00 per night, single or double, is 15 April 2000. The hotel address is 2270 Hotel Circle, San Diego, CA 92108. Phone 800-882-0858. Hotel parking is free. The registration fee is \$5.00. Contact Robert E. Ley, 3574 Wellston Ct., Simi Valley, CA 93063.

Our reliable treasurer BILL WILSON, 65th Pilot from Snyder, TX, received lifetime associate membership fees from KEN ZACHEM. KEN is the son of T/Sgt. MAX ZACHEM. KEN resides at 352 Rte. 2, Preston, CT 06365. Welcome aboard!

JOHN E. SOITO has joined us as an Associate member. He wrote that he had the honor of flying in the B-24 J *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL* this past fall out of Portsmouth, NH. JOHN resides at 23 Dearborn Drive, East Providence, RI 02915-1415. His home phone is 401-433-2372 and his business phone is 401-435-7600. Did the ride in *THE DRAGON* play a role in deciding to join the association of the best heavy bomb group in the Pacific, JOHN?

After receiving a membership application from the secretary, JOHN mailed him 2 colored photos of his A-2 Jacket. It has the 43rd Insignia on the front along with silver wings and his name; the arm patches are in place. The reverse side shows a colored painting of *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. It is a painting of the Collings Foundation's B-24. To add to the mystery, JOHN's letterhead features an 8th AAF B-17 and the caption "The Eighth Air Force Historical Society Rhode Island Chapter." In the room where the colored photos were taken are a couple of photos. One of these seems to show a pilot squatted on the wing of a fighter with the letters "ROY..." showing. An 8th AF patch is showing at the bottom left of the photo. The other shows a pilot sitting in the cockpit of a fighter. The plane appears to have 6 marking on it for possible enemy kills. We will have to find out more about JOHN and what connection he has to these memorabilia.

Now that he is 83+ years young, ROGER E. VARGAS, 63rd Navigator from Riverside, CA, has decided that he would renew his membership for life "to an outstanding organization." When he wrote his letter last October, he said that he hoped to be in Tucson later that month for the reunion God willing.

SHIRLEY J. NELSON wrote to thank the staff for the enjoyable Newsletter and to thank those of you who were helpful in her research to learn more about her brother's (CHARLES W. STRAW) WWII activities.

JEANNE PFEIFFER widow of the late 64th Pilot JOHN PFEIFFER has paid up her dues for another three years. She enjoys reading the Newsletter and did appreciate the list of names of those

who attended the Tucson reunion as it brought back many memories. She says that she and JOHN had the privilege of attending 6 reunions, and she wishes the organization continued success in the years ahead.

J. C. "RED" FRONABARGER, 65th Bombardier from Lexington, TN, mailed a copy of our Newsletter to fellow crewmate **ELMER J. SCHWALBACH** who has sent **BILL** a check for his dues. He is one of several new members to our association. **ELMER** is looking for back issues of the Newsletter. Perhaps **BILL** mailed him some if there are any in Snyder. If anyone has any spare ones they would like to share with **ELMER**, his address is 8511 W. Layton Ave., Greenfield, WI 53228-2924.

Enclosed with his check for his 2000-year dues **RICHARD PATTON**, 64th Gunner from Denver, CO, notes that he is "81 years old and still on the right side of the grass."

DALE W. ALLTON of Newark, OH, writes that it was not Y2K which has caused him to be a bit late with his dues. He says that both he and his wife need a bit of help now and then with their memories. Join the crowd, **DALE**. He is looking for a 43rd Bomb Group shoulder patch. For Christmas his wife framed his medals, patches, etc., but he lacks one for the 43rd. Perhaps **BILL** had one to send to him in response to his request, but the editor does not recall seeing any for sale at our PX in Tucson. Just in case, is there anyone of you who could help **DALE** out?

Remitting to **BILL** his dues for 2 years, **WALTER B. KICHURA** writes that he enjoys the Newsletter "tremendously" as it keeps him up to date with what is going on in the association. He is in his 7th year of chemotherapy which restricts his traveling. He is hopeful that the treatments will end soon enough for him to make the San Antonio reunion. We hope so too, **BILL**.

Sending a "Hi you all" and a special blessing to Col. **JAMES PETTUS**, 43rd CO and Pilot from Honolulu, HI, is 64th Crew Chief **PHILIP M. HOFFECKER** from Kennett Square, PA. He says that is it nice that so many fellow members can attend the reunions. The special reunion edition of our Newsletter was especially touching for him, as he can't seem to get away from his work to attend these events.

PHIL sent **BILL** a check for some nameplates, a 1999-reunion cap if available as well as a contribution to the association. He says that he has been suffering for a few months with muscle spasms. He has some hope of making it to San Antonio this year, as he has never been in Texas.

He sends his best to all and says may "God be with you all." His phone is 610-347-2174.

Even after the big move from his 8-room house to a high rise apartment, **REGINALD TATRO**, 65th Radio Operator from Greenfield, MA, did not forget to send in his 2000-year dues. He writes that he was sorry to have missed Tucson, but health does not permit the travel. It was especially hard to have missed the reunion this year as their daughter lives in Phoenix and they had hoped to spend some time with her.

REG is very impressed with the Ken's Men web site and the fine work **TRACY TUCCIARONE**, Associate member from Indianapolis, IN, web master and Sweetheart of the 43rd, is doing for all of us.

Along with his dues for 2000-2001 **CLINTON BRASSER**, 65th Flight Engineer from Sheboygan, WI, sends us a change of area telephone code. His phone is 920-452-5579.

JOHN T. PARRAN, 64th Pilot from South Pasadena, FL, has brought his dues up to date. In his letter he enclosed a copy of a 1992 newspaper article from the *ST. PETERSBURG TIMES*. It is by Jacquin Sanders and shows **JOHN** holding a B-24 control wheel. The story explains the wheel and its

connection with JOHN. John had received the wheel in October 1992 and the story paraphrased below explains why.

Early in the morning of Aug. 16, 1943, JOHN was piloting his B-24 back to Port Moresby after a night raid on Wewak, N.G. There was heavy fog and the navigator became disoriented, as did John. It was only their 5th mission.

He attempted to follow the coast, but not too closely, as he knew that there were mountains between where they were and Port Moresby. JOHN flew low to stay under the fog, as there was no way he could penetrate the fog with the lack of visibility. In time they were getting low in gas.

JOHN's 10-man crew had trained together and flown the plane in stages from Lincoln, NE, to Hawaii and on to the SWPA. They had arrived in Port Moresby only a couple of months before this.

JOHN informed the crew of the situation, that he was going to ditch the plane and that anyone who wanted to bail out should do so immediately. The crew all chose to stay with the plane. JOHN put the craft down just offshore and is quoted as saying, "It was like hitting a wall, like going from 80 mph to zero in a second. Water is not compressible."

Unfortunately, in the rear hold of the plane a machine gun tore loose and banged around in the plane hitting and killing 3 men: **ROBBY ROBINSON**, Assistant Engineer; **BOB NORRIS**, Bombardier; and **SAMMY SHAPIRO**, Gunner.

The other 7 men escaped, more or less unhurt, and got into 2 inflatable lifeboats that hung to the plane's wings. They made it to shore in a few minutes and assembled a shelter from parachute parts. They managed to get the radio functioning. Air-Sea Rescue Command picked them up that afternoon.

After that crash the crew became separated. Some filled in on other crews as replacements. JOHN flew a few more missions and was assigned to operations. He ended the war as a major.

In February 1992, JOHN was amazed to find in his mail a letter from Brian Hall, an Australian with an international excavation and dredging business.

Brian, also an aviation buff, while doing some dredging found JOHN's B-24 just where the crew had abandoned it off the shore of New Guinea. Its wings were barely underwater. Brian salvaged all that was left of the plane. In the intervening years, from crash to discovery, the natives had carried off what they could. Tracing the serial number of the plane he was able to learn the pilot's name and whereabouts.

Brian Hall took one propeller and a machine gun and restored them and placed them in the garden in front of his office in Buderin, Queensland.

After that, Brian sent the control wheel to JOHN.

JOHN added this information to the story. He says that he was one of the guys along with **NICK ARABINKO**, Punta Gorda, FL, and **ART MULLIGAN**, Delray Beach, FL, who piloted the first B-24s to the 43rd.

He expressed his regrets that he has not been able to make any reunions.

Sending apologies for being behind in his dues, **FRED C. COOKE**, 65th Navigator from Ft. Walton Beach, FL, decided to opt for life membership and resolve the problem of keeping up with one's dues.

FRED reports that his wife, **PAMELA**, had a stroke about 3.5 years ago, but she has been recovering well enough to be able to spend November and December 1998 in Australia. They look forward to going to Auckland, New Zealand for the final of the America Cup boat races and then on to Australia to visit with PAMELA's folks. The families visit back and forth between Mareeba, Queensland, Australia and Florida.

FRED and PAMELA hope to be able to attend future reunions now that PAMELA is feeling better.

They have sold their home on the waterfront and will be moving into a condominium early in 2000 as this will make it move convenient when they travel.

RICHARD W. COOPER, 65th Navigator from Conneaut, OH, has provided us with his winter address for the months of January, February and March. He writes that his son will be sure to forward mail rather than the Postal Service that apparently messed up his mail last year.

DICK says that he no longer can handle the winters in Ohio for flying solo. His nearest neighbor to the north is a Canadian 39 miles away.

His address will be until further notice **87 Jefferson Road, Princeton, NJ 08540**.

Remitting 2 years' dues and writing that the staff does a great job with the Newsletter, **DANIEL C. FERGUSEN** 63rd Flight Engineer from Whittier, CA, also included "a little for the kitty."

KENNETH H. GISSONE, 403rd Navigator from Rocky River, OH, sent BILL his dues and reports that things have changed a great deal for him since **URSULA** died last April. He hopes that he can make the reunion in San Antonio.

CLYDE F. MUSE Jr., 403rd from Big Pine, FL, brought his dues up to date and was glad to read that some action would be taken about our history book which has never been produced. He says it is hard for him to understand the delay. He served as an intelligence officer for the Sqdn. 66 TCS and within 2 years after the war the Group book was published.

He hopes that maybe he will get his mission photos back from Larry once the book is completed. [Anyone who has material not returned by **LARRY HICKEY**, should contact him individually and request the return of such.]

CLYDE says that he looks forward to receiving the Newsletter.

Catching up with his dues is **STEPHEN J. VELIKY**, 63rd Navigator from Garfield, NJ. He says that he stayed in the Air Force Reserves following WWII and retired as a major.

He thinks the "bulletin" is great and enjoys reading it as well as looking forward to it. This is one reason for paying his dues writes **URBAN C. NYE**, 64th Gunner from Winter Springs, FL. He sends his thanks to all of those who "... work to keep the 43rd Bomb Group alive and kicking."

GARNETT L. PEELING, 65th Ordinance from Presque Isle, MI, also thinks that BILL and his comrades are doing a great job with the association and the Newsletter. He asks all to keep up the good work. He enclosed his dues for 2000 with his letter.

403rd Top Turret Gunner, **CHRISTOPHER C. SLONE** from Mousie, KY, mailed BILL his dues through 2001. His fishing lake, reported in an earlier Newsletter, is nearly completed but is not filled completely yet, due to the very dry 1999. He hopes to have it in operation by this spring.

CHRIS writes that he has lived in the same place for 33 years and had his address change 5 times. His latest is **20 Christopher Slone Rd., Mousie, KY 41839-8935**. He sent along a bit of humor that appears under the Humor feature later in the Newsletter.

ROBERT J. MULVEY, 403rd from South Yarmouth, MA, sent BILL his 2000-year dues and a newspaper article with a feature story about the Collings Foundation's B-24 J now named *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. The article contains 4 colored photos of the plane and nose art, of three WWII B-24 crewmen who were present at the airfield on Nantucket, MA, at the time the plane was stopping there on its annual tour. The story featured is about the 3 men who flew in B-24s over Europe and their experiences as a nose gunner, a tail gunner and a ball turret gunner. One was shot down by anti aircraft fire and was rescued by Yugoslavian patriots who returned him to American forces. Another photo shows a 15-year old lad manning a waist gun and the B-17 *Nine-O-Nine* flying nearby off the port side the B-24.

As the editor was typing about *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL* in the paragraph above, the day's mail arrived with a copy of the December 1999 issue of *IN FLIGHT USA*, from **EDWARD L. GAMMILL**, 63rd Aircraft Maintenance from Phoenix, AZ. He gets this magazine while attending monthly meetings of the American Aviation Historical Society.

The color photo on the cover page is of the Collings Foundations' B-24 *J All American* that was renamed #973 *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL* in January 1999. This being the 60th anniversary year of the B-24, the magazine features several stories about B-24s including a terrific article on #973 with some fantastic colored photos. It also pictures the B-24 at the Fantasy of Flight in Florida. This plane was visited by many of us during the Kissimmee reunion in 1996. Before Kermit Weeks purchased that plane it had been named *DELECTABLE DORIS* and had nose art, both of which the Fantasy of Flight museum removed.

THOMAS LLOYD "BREEZY" BOREN, JR., 65th Bombardier from San Antonio, TX, forwarded to the editor the January 2000 issue of *BAD NEWS* a Journal of the BAD 2 Association. This is a publication devoted to B-17s and the 8th AAF. BREEZY writes that **BOB TATRO**, a former member of the 43rd had served as president of BAD 2 Association from 1986-1987.

One article of interest is about the move to honor Jane Fonda as one of the outstanding women of the 20th Century. As many Vietnam veterans have testified countless times, she apparently was directly responsible for the deaths of 3 POWs held in North Vietnam when she visited that country while we were at "war" with it. A great deal of information about this infamous visit and how her actions led directly to the deaths of these men also is being widely publicized on the Internet. BAD 2, like many other veteran organizations, is not only opposed to this idea, it wants to know how she had avoided being charged with treason over these many years.

Humor taken directly from this journal is given here rather than in the feature section on humor.

Suggestions For Flying

Takeoffs are optional. Landings are mandatory.

Altitude is life insurance. No one has ever collided with the sky.

The only time you have too much fuel is when you are on fire.

You probably landed with the wheels up if it takes full power to taxi.

Any attempt to stretch fuel is guaranteed to increase headwind.

Note to pilots: Three things which do you no good in aviation: Altitude above you; runway behind you; fuel in the truck.

Flying is the second greatest thrill known to man. Landing is the first!

Associate member **JOHN S. EDMISTEN, Jr.**, a writer from Live Oak, FL, states that while in Nadzab in 1944, he saw a B-24 with 5 German Watercraft and 3 German Aircraft painted on it. He was told that it was sent from Europe to the States for a war bond selling tour and then went on to the Pacific. He is seeking information about this plane. If any of you readers know anything more to tell JOHN, please contact him at 13582 92nd, Live Oak, FL 32060.

ROBERT "BOB" W. WHITE, 65th Tail Gunner from W. Peabody, MA, writes that he flew 52 missions from Port Moresby, Dobodura and Nadzab on the crew of **WILLIAM R. BRYAN** which was later piloted by **VERNON F. GASTON** from San Marcos, CA.

BOB says that while browsing on the 43rd's web site he noticed that the late **JOSHUA H. BARNES**, Pilot from Winchester, KY, was listed as a CO of the 65th followed by Maj. **HESTON McDONALD**. Bob says that between these two COs was **FRANK M. WHITE**. He believes FRANK commanded the 65th from approximately Dec. '43 to after July '44. He writes that his crew and that of FRANK WHITE trained together at Pocatello, ID, and flew to New Guinea together. They arrived in

Port Moresby, N.G. on 16 Sept. '43 and left for the first leg home (Finschhafen, N.G.) 29 July '44. WHITE's crew returned to the States while FRANK stayed on as CO.

BOB's e-mail address is <pupb24@aol.com>.

We have a couple more new e-mail addresses from among our members. DAYTON BLANCHARD, 65th Pilot from Cibolo, TX, during the winter has logged on to the 43rd web site. His e-mail address is <DaytfromNM@webtv.net>.

Our former President and 65th Navigator, MAX OSBORN from Sun Lakes, AZ, is also now among those who surf the Internet. MAX wrote that he broke 100 in golf the other day, but he didn't mention on which 9. His e-mail address is <FMOSBORN@aol.com>. MAX also reports a new phone number: 480-802-4532.

EVAN HOWELL, 65th Flight Engineer from Arcata, CA, mailed to LLOYD "BREEZY" BOREN, 65th Bombardier from San Antonio and former Secretary/Treasurer of our association, a form for the Group Roster. EVAN writes that he flew from Port Moresby and Seven Mile Strip from 28 Mar. '42 to 25 Oct. '43 on the crew of pilot Maj. DAN CROMEZ. He earned a DFC and 6 Air Medals. After that tour he flew 35 combat missions from 19 Sep. '44 to 20 Jan. '45 in the 501st BG 384th Sqd 8th AAF out of Kettering, England as Flight Engineer on the crew of JOHN De FRANCESCO. He did not receive any medals from this tour of duty. De FRANCESCO's crew was shot down the day after EVAN received his orders to return to the States having completed his missions. JOHN and 5 others on that crew parachuted to safety but 2 men were lost. EVAN says, "JOHN D. was one hell of a Good Pilot."

EVAN's address is 1182 Fickle Hill ROAD, ARCATA, CA 95521-9001. His phone number is 707-825-7223.

Our immediate past president, SAM COMMONS 65th Flight Engineer from Flower Town, PA, forwarded to the sect./editor a very nice thank you card from IRENE WATSON for the gift the Association presented to her at Tucson for all of the wonderful services she has performed for our association for more than a decade.

6 Dec. 1999

Dear Sam & Helen:

The Waterford crystal candleholders are the most beautiful possession I have!

I'm sure you realized how thrilled I was to receive this beautiful gift as I moved around the room showing them to everyone.

It has always been my pleasure to serve the 43rd Bomb Group.

It makes me happy to help each year and to see the wonderful people who belong to this great Bomb Group.

I want you all to know how much I appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Love you,
Irene Watson

PAUL J. BLASEWITZ, 63rd Tail Gunner from Clearwater, FL, wrote to SAM COMMONS wondering what was going on? While surfing the Internet he found a Barnes & Noble listing of a book by LAWRENCE J. HICKEY et al., Associate member and military historian, entitled *KEN'S MEN AGAINST THE EMPIRE*. It was about the 43rd Bombardment Group in WW II. [Despite the fact that it is listed as having been published in 1998 and has an ISBN number, the book has not as yet gone to press PAUL. You have to be patient. See comments re this book later in the Newsletter.]

PAUL also states that he flew on the crew of Capt. RALPH De LOACH, 63rd Pilot from Marina Del Re, CA.

SAM has completed correcting the errors found in the Tucson photo album and returned the corrections to the Dunning Co. Their camera taking candid shots at Tucson failed to function properly so they had no such photos. SAM sent them copies of photos he or HELEN had taken along with those he received from others. He believes that the albums will be mailed to those who have ordered and paid for copies sometime in early April.

If you want to order one of these albums, you may do so up to May 30th. The address is **Dunning Co. Inc, P.O. Box 759, Theodore, AL 36590**. Specify 43rd Bomb Group reunion at Tucson, AZ, Job #99-506. The phone number is **800-846-6335**.

SAM's major complaint is that he lost a month of playing golf in the Philly area due to the snow they had, but he and HELEN were back at their game before mid March.

Here we go with another change of address to put into your new Roster. **CHARLES STENGLEIN**, 65th Aerial Photographer, has e-mailed a change of address. He says that he also sent this change to **LARRY HICKEY** so that the books he ordered will not go astray!

They have moved into an apartment until their new house is ready on the gulf coast of Florida. The address of their apartment is **1861 Long Iron Dr. #908, Viera, FL 32955**.

PAUL H. COBER, 403rd Pilot from New Oxford, PA, has forwarded to the editor photos he received from **LOREAN TILLOTSON** of Springdale, AR, and widow of the late **KENNETH TILLOTSON**, 403rd Pilot. She sent PAUL a collection of photos that had been in KEN's collection of keepsakes and for which she had no use. Most of these were taken late in the war on Ie Shima. The editor scanned copies of these and sent them via e-mail to **TRACY TUCCIARONE**, Sweetheart of the 43rd and Web Master of our web site. They should be appearing in the 403rd section of the web site. The original photos are being sent on to **ELDON "BUD" LAWSON**, 65th Bombardier and 43rd Association Historian from Bay Village, OH.

E-mail arrived from **AUDREY** and **ROGER G. KETTLESON**, our Vice President and 64th Pilot from Las Vegas, NV. They only got on line recently. They will be joining AUDREY's cousin and her husband, a B-17 Tail Gunner and amputee, on Feb. 21st for a 17-day cruise around the southern tip of South America. They fly to Santiago, Chile and return home from Rio de Janeiro. We wish them a safe and wonderful trip.

Their e-mail address is <43rgk@access1.net>.

A beautifully printed thank you note arrived from **ELAIN PIERCE**, 43rd Bomb Group Elf.

The Roster is in the mail. The Year End is closed and the W-2's are finished. Now I would like to take a moment to say Thank-you to everyone for my 43rd Bomb Group Association plaque I received in December. I was honored by the thoughtfulness from everyone.

Thank you,
Elain
43rd bomb Group Elf

FRANK HOHMANN again sends word via e-mail that **ALTON D. LEAMAN**, 403rd & 65th Tail Gunner from Indianapolis, IN, has had an operation for colon cancer and is having problems. ALTON also served in the 19th BG. His phone is not listed in the 2000 Roster. It is **317-255-8911**. A card or a phone call would be helpful.

FRANK also reported that **EUGENE "DUTCH" BENEDETTI**, 65th Pilot from Monterey Park, CA, is suffering from advanced stages of Alzheimer's. His wife, **MARJORIE**, has her hands full and

can't keep up with all that has to be done. The address is 608 S. Bradshaw Ave., Monterey Park, CA 91754. The phone is 113-280-7970. Again a card or a call would be thoughtful.

The 90th BG Association's Feb. Newsletter contains a letter from the Executive Director of the *American Battle Monuments Commission* in Washington, D.C. It is in recognition of a \$2,000 donation that the 90th made for the WWII NATIONAL MEMORIAL to be erected on the Mall in the capital.

There is also a copy of a letter of thanks from Charles D. Link, Major General, USAF, Retired, for their monetary gift to the AIR FORCE MEMORIAL FOUNDATION.

Their national reunion will be held in Las Vegas, NV, from Sunday, Oct. 1, 2000 to Thursday, Oct. 5th. It will be held at the Imperial Palace with a nightly rate of \$59 plus tax. If you are interested, the hosts are Jim and Kay McAteer, 1230 Camino del Lago, San Marcos, CA 92069. Their phone is 760-744-7997.

There are also tentative plans for an Eastern Mini Reunion at Gettysburg, PA. If interested contact George Taylor, 108 Eddington Ave., Harrisburg, PA 17111. Phone 717-564-0355.

The B-29 Superfortress Historical Assoc., Inc., is still seeking persons who would like their names or those of family or friends on the memorial plaque to be erected on the Honor Court at the USAF Academy in Colorado Springs, CO. The minimum donation for your name(s) to be included is \$900. There is a limit of 400 names. The dedication services will be held on Sept. 8, 2000.

A 1/7-scale model of the B-29, with the memorial plaque, will join those of the P-38, P-40, P-47, P-51, B-17 and B-24.

Contact 1-800-305-1738 or call Sect. Jim Pattillo at 805-969-2796. They have a web site at www.warbirdcentral.com. The association has been incorporated as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt, non-profit corporation.

Our President, MAX M. AXELSEN, 403rd Pilot from San Antonio, TX, has sent the editor a copy of a letter that he sent to JEAN and GEORGE ANDERSON, 403rd Pilot from Blairstown, NJ. On page 10 of the January 2000 Newsletter, Vol. 73, GEORGE has a story about his flight engineer to Balikpapan while GEORGE was in the hospital. MAX says that the mission was to Davao, Philippine Islands, if his memory serves him correctly. In his own words:

The pilot was Lt. WEAVER, a flight school classmate of mine. Co-pilot was Lt. Jerry REIGIS, who came over on my crew, but after a few missions, I requested a change since he could not fly formation. He was always on the gauges! I could never get him to keep his eyes outside when in formation! Weaver took a round from a Jap fighter which hit him where the front and back of the suit tied. REIGES, allowed the plane to cross back of lead, they were in the #2 position, ...narrowly a mid-air with #3...and lost some of the left wing...4 ft. or so. The engineer dropped out of the top turret and helped regain control. I was at the strip when the flight returned since I was concerned about the ability of REIGES after having gone through that experience. Anyhooo, Geo., that is my recollection of that mission...if there was another, over Balikpapan, I would like to hear of it...since I was there on 10 Oct. 44 and such an incident did not take place.

MAX goes on and encourages JEAN and GEORGE to "saddle up your horsepower to come to S.A. I will give you camper info, or whatever you need to make your visit pleasant. Take care and stay well. Our ranks are diminishing and we can't lose more of the good folks!!!"

An interesting web site for those of you on the Internet is www.wnpela.com. It is devoted to the WWII crashes, wrecks, etc. in the Southwest Pacific Theater as far east as Guadalcanal.

The editor received a phone call about mid February from JOSEPH IANCHELLO, 43rd Bomb Wing Maintenance. He had just located us in a rather round about fashion. It seems that a neighbor of

a buddy of his from the 43rd BW was in Tucson at the time of our last reunion. He was staying at the same hotel where we held our reunion. On Friday morning of the reunion, he left the front entrance of the hotel to board a bus for a tour with his group. He was directed to one of our buses and ended up taking the trip to Davis Monthan AFB, the officers club for lunch and the visit to the Pima Air Museum. He found it most fascinating and knew that he had the neighbor who had served in the 43rd. So he took 43rd materials home to that neighbor who passed the information on to JOE. JOE says he has kept in contact with 15 others from the 43rd BW, and not one of them knew of our existence. JOE asked for an application to join our association. He says he does not want to miss the San Antonio reunion. The editor steered him to our web site as he said that he has a friend who is on the Internet.

JOE's address is 4567 Alder Drive, Port Orange, FL 32127-4256.

DAVID A. ADAMS, 403rd and 64th Pilot from Bellevue, NE or Texas in the wintertime, sent the editor a copy of his diary of his missions. The editor has received several such documents recently. It will be difficult to get each of these into an upcoming newsletter, but he will make an effort to do so. Regardless, all of these will be forwarded, in time, to our historian for safe keeping for posterity.

DAVID refers to page 16 of the Jan. 1999 Newsletter, Edition 69. In particular he wants to set the record straight as he responds to a question posed by ROY E. BAKER, 403rd Waist Gunner from Apple Valley, CA. DAVID says that their crew left Hawaii in Aug. 1942 with a new B-17 G. The crew consisted of "MITCH" COBEAGA, Pilot; DAVE ADAMS, Copilot; R. O. BROWN, Navigator; CARMINE RACIOPPO, Bombardier; JOE DeSILVIO, Engineer; HANK ELSASSER, Radio Operator; PAPPY ENGEL, Tail Gunner; ROY E. BAKER, Waist Gunner; and CHARLES R. JACKSON, Ball Turret.

DAVID recalls that the crew joined the 19th BG 28th Sqdn. The crew flew a few missions and then was assigned to the 435th Sqdn. Most of this time was spent at Townsville, Australia. Missions were flown out of Port Moresby. Most of these were recco missions.

Since ROY had asked about their November missions, here is a brief rundown of those as excerpted from DAVID's diary.

Sunday, Nov. 1, 1942. Although the crews were up at 3:00 AM, an air raid in progress prevented anyone from getting breakfast or taking off. After 3 passes the enemy planes left causing no damage. The mission was underway at 5:45 AM. While on the mission, an enemy convoy was sighted. After completing the mission the crew landed at Moresby at 1PM but were sent off at 2 PM to strike the ~~convoy~~ sighted earlier. A search until dark did not locate the convoy; the plane landed at 10 PM. Due to bad weather several passes had to be made before landing. Exhausted the crew could barely stand up and there was no food to eat. Each man could have eaten a cow. We got to bed about midnight.

Nov. 11, 1942. Our crew flew to Iron Range and joined the 403rd. (You [ROY] were right, it was a hellhole. We nearly got killed when a pilot of a B-24 landed downwind.)

Nov. 12, 1942. I was told that I would take over as Pilot. Mitch was now the operations officer and 2nd in command.

Nov. 14, 1942. We took off for Port Moresby. Lt. Jack was Co-Pilot. My ship was #536. Our next mission was the next day.

Nov. 15, 1942. This was one of many that we flew out to Hood Point up over 15,000 feet over the Owen Stanley Range. We let down and found New Britain along the southern shore to Gasmata. Then on and crossed over New Britain at a bay south of Rabaul to Northern New Britain, down the north side to sometimes Hollandia, Wewak, Ma[d]ang, Lae, Buna, all on New Guinea. We were usually taking pictures and hunting for shipping. Sometimes we would get up to Kavieng. We called these mail runs.

Nov. 16, 1942. Bad accident at Iron Range. A B-24 got away on takeoff and hit two other B-24s. Just missed a B-17 F. Went off on the left side of the runway and blew up. It killed the whole crew and 4 guards. It wrecked 4 complete planes.

Nov. 21, 1942. Pickard was checked out today and he took over Brecht Crew. Brecht moved to operations. We moved to Fall River at Milne Bay.

Nov. 22, 1942. Very bad weather and long hours. Went to bed at 12:15 AM and got up at 12:45 AM. Finally got off at 4:00 AM. Flew all morning until 12:15 PM. Off again with Lt. Smith's crew at 4:00 PM. Landed at Iron Range after 6:00 PM. Everything was packed for a trip to Fall River, so we had no clean clothes, etc.

Nov. 23, 1942. Jack Frost shot down in the Buna Area.

Nov. 30, 1942. Lt. Titus and Crew plus the C.O. were missing.

HOWARD K. ANDERSON, 64th from Los Angeles, CA, sent e-mail to the editor saying he was having a difficult time contacting him via e-mail, but that message came through fine. **ANDY** would like to alert our good readers of a new book he recently purchased, *Fire in the Sky* by Eric M. Bergerud. **ANDY** says that it is about the first two years of the air war in the Pacific and two or three of our 43rd B-17 veterans are "... quoted repeatedly as are many Kiwis, Aussies, Americans and Japanese." The book "... is well researched and consists of 700 pages with photos and maps." The publisher is Westview Press and Barnes and Noble carry it. He purchased his copy from Harper Collins 800-331-3761. **ANDY** gives no price for the book.

Sending in a couple of years' dues and a correction of his address is **ROBERT A. CLAYCOMBE**, 65th Pilot. **BOB** was very interested in the account on page 13 of our Jan. 2000 Newsletter by **ARVID HOUGLUM**, 64th Pilot from Grandview, TX, of his August 25, 1945 mission. **BOB** writes, "To my dying day I will remember the sight of Hiroshima as we flew over it. At that time we could not comprehend that one bomb could cause that much damage. It's even more frightening to know that compared to the present day atomic weapons the one at Hiroshima is only a firecracker."

BOB's correct address is 506 Chamber of Commerce Bldg., 320 N. Meridian, Indianapolis, IN 46204.

Also in the Jan. 2000 Newsletter on pages 15-16 **ROBERT W. "BOB" WHITE**, 65th Tail Gunner from West Peabody, MA, was seeking information about B-17 *LUCKY LUCILLE*. **LLOYD "BREEZY" BOREN**, 65th Bombardier from San Antonio, TX, wrote to say that the Crew Chief of that plane was **LARRY W. DeHAVEN** of Lakehills, TX. **BREEZY** points out that **LARRY** is a member of our Association and is listed in the 2000 Roster. He also cites that **LARRY** helped in a big way with the first meeting of our association where 56 men met in San Antonio in Dec. 1981 to get this association started.

QUENTIN R. EMBER, 403rd Line Chief from Newport News, VA, mailed a check for his year 2000 dues and reported a change in his telephone area code. His phone is 757-877-4647.

He writes that he often thinks of the trip from Bangor, ME, to Fort Dix, NJ, then to Australia, Milne Bay and Moresby in New Guinea. "What a journey."

In a phone call from **FRANK LABIE**, 64th from Port Richey, FL, he informed the editor that he was mailing a couple of photos of two different *MILLION \$ BABY* aircraft from the 43rd. The editor will wait to see if they shed any further light on the question of the two planes shown in the Jan. 2000 Newsletter.

FRANK says that due to the illness of his wife, **ELIZABETH**, he has not been able to attend the reunions, but is in high hopes of being able to make it to Nashville next year.

He was with the 43rd from sometime in '44 and was on Ie Shima at the end of the war.

His photos arrived via snail mail. The 2 photos of a *MILLION \$ BABY* enclosed are large photos of the 2 planes appearing in the Jan. 2000 Newsletter, page 26. He enclosed an extremely similar photo of

a B-24 with the name *IZA VAILABLE TOO* that apparently was featured in a D.A.V. calendar some years ago. The photo was "Courtesy - Smithsonian Institution, Photo No. 3A-45977."

FRANK's photo of the B-24 (in the left photo in the Jan. Newsletter) shows a Sgt. JOHNSON alongside the plane. FRANK says that JOHNSON was the crew chief and that is a 64th plane although he says it is possible that a Sgt. HALVERSON may have been the crew chief. This photo was taken at Clark Field.

He believes his other photo of the plane at the left in the Jan. Newsletter was taken on New Guinea in 1944. It still remains unclear if that plane was from the 403rd. The editor thought that he would have heard from someone about this particular plane by now but no such luck.

FRANK writes that he worked on that 64th B-24 along with *COCKTAIL HOUR*.

He also writes that while still in the States and stationed at March Field in California, he was "bad soldier." He reports that he had 126 days of AWOL while in the service for nearly 4 years. When he was shipped from March Field, he was given a 10 day delay in route before he was to report at Camp Kearns in Utah but he took 20 instead. Again while being shipped out he and another soldier were escorted from the brig by an old sergeant holding a 45-cal. pistol near their backs. When they came within 10' of a sign that read "THROUGH THESE PORTALS PASS THE BEST SOLDIERS IN THE WORLD," the sergeant made them halt and walk around the sign not under it.

As this took place the other soldier whispered to FRANK, "Let's make a break for it." Thinking of the consequences of what that 45-caliber pistol could do, they thought better of that suggestion.

They shipped to Camp Antiox and then were put on a ship headed overseas. FRANK spent 38 days at sea and arrived at Finschhafen, N.G. From that date on he was "... the best damned soldier, no chicken crap, and I was contented." He says he would have married one of the native girls had they not been so ugly. Being ugly himself, he writes that he and one of those women would have made a great pair.

He hopes to make it to San Antonio, but if not, he will get to Nashville provided JOSEPH R. JANCOSKO, 64th Director from Pittsburgh, PA, promises to bring some pirogies to that reunion.

He also reports that his wife, ELIZABETH, has been a dementia patient for the past 12 years. FRANK still takes care of her at home and after 53 years of marriage he says, "I love her more and more every day."

LELAND R. LOUGHREY, 403rd Navigator from West Chester, PA, sent e-mail to tell that the editor that he was sending via snail mail 2 photos of the nose of *MILLION \$ BABY*. He says these were taken at Nadzab, N.G. when the plane first arrived. It was the first B-24 the men had ever seen that was not painted olive drab and was assigned to the 403rd. It led the group on one mission but the other pilots complained that it was hard on their eyes when formation flying so it never was used as the lead plane again. He says that this is definitely the plane at the right on page 26 of the Jan. Newsletter. Its number is 44-413315.

It was piloted by BECK on a raid to Hollandia on 22 May '44.

LELAND asks that we change our Rosters to show his area code is 610.

He enjoys the Newsletter, but is hoping to read something about our history soon. [It has not gone to the printer as yet.]

The photos arrived in good shape along with LELAND's dues for 3 years of membership. The photos are very clear after all these years. That 403rd *million \$ Baby* #44-413315 is definitely the one pictured at the right on page 26 of the Jan. 2000 Newsletter. So the one pictured at the left is definitely the 64th's B-24. There is one handsome young man, LELAND, standing by the nose art of the 403rd's plane. The editor will scan these and send copies to TRACY TUCCARONE, Associate from Indianapolis, IN, and Web Master of the 43rd's web site. You may see them there in time.

SALVATORE MUSELLA, 65th Radio Operator from Stuart, FL, enclosed a check for his year 2000 dues in his letter. He says that he and EMILY plan on making it to San Antonio this year. They

missed Tucson last year due to a couple of knee replacements- the right one on Aug. 18th and the left one on Oct. 20th. He writes that he is progressing well and the toughest part of the entire procedure was the physical therapy following the surgeries, but he says that was well worth it.

SAL says that like **HAROLD W. DONNER**, 63rd Gunner from Tonawanda, NY, he too applied for the Philippine Liberation Medal and the Philippine Republic Unit Citation Badge last Aug. 17th. He enclosed his check for the correct amount, but also like **HAROLD** he has heard nothing and his check had not been cashed by Feb. 27, 2000. [See page 14, Vol. 73, Jan. 2000 Newsletter.]

Sending in his dues for life membership is **JOHN B. CROSBY**, 403rd Bombardier from Ponte Verda Beach, FL. **JOHN** says that he flew most of his missions on the crew of our current association president, **MAX M. AXELSEN**, 403rd Pilot from San Antonio and co-host of the 2000 reunion.

JOHN says that he has undergone a series of operations on his spine, hands and eyes over the past 2 years. As a result he has missed the past couple of reunions, but hopes to be in San Antonio this year.

He asks the staff to keep up the good work.

LOREN C. BATES, 403rd Radio Operator from Sacramento, CA, has brought his dues up to date saying that he had not realized he had fallen behind. He too enjoys the Newsletter and thinks all of those running our Association are doing a great job. He is now on the Internet and is really enjoying it.

Also remitting his 2000-year dues is Associate member, **MICHAEL K. SASSAMAN** from Waldoboro, ME. **MICHAEL** makes a special appeal to the association, so the editor will quote his letter in its entirety.

I read, with interest, the comments made in the last newsletter regarding the future of the Association once the current "original" members pass on to that great 'operations center' up in the sky. Yes, you guys ARE the reason for this organization. YOU were THERE. YOU got the JOB DONE. YOU did the hard flying, the fighting, the hurting and in many cases, the dying. I am PROUD of ALL of YOU. I am also very proud that my father [**FRANCIS**] was one of you.

But he is gone. I am the next generation. I am interested in what he did for his country. I am interested in what he did while he was a member of the 63rd BS of the 43rd BG. And I want to continue that interest and make sure that future generations remember what the greatest generation did for them. So why can't there be a Second Generation membership to keep the memory alive?

Think about it. Other groups have such a category. Why not the 43rd?
MICHAEL's e-mail address is <Mikeks@mint.net>.

Paying his dues through 2001 **RAYMOND MATTESEN**, 64th Ground Crew from Stafford Springs, CT, reminisces about travelling from Bangor, ME, to Boston and onto the Queen Mary to Sydney, Australia. From Randwick track [south of Sydney] the 64th went by train to Dailey Waters, unloading and reloading as it left one state and entered another because the railroad track gauge was not uniform and changed from state to state. From Dailey Waters the squadron went by truck convoy through a large part of the interior of the country. There were many stops to camp along the way with the squadron personnel making most of those camps. Eventually the 64th arrived in Darwin in Northern Australia where it boarded a ship and headed to Queensland to rejoin the rest of the 43rd. He wonders if anyone else remembers this?

Even though your Rosters are new, changes take place all the time. **ABE HELLMAN**, 403rd Navigator from Miami Beach, FL, asks that his phone number be changed from his former New Jersey number. Please make this correction in your Roster. His phone is 305-538-2465.

ABE says that although he does not know about other states, he knows from experience that veterans in Florida can get their prescriptions filled at no cost through the Veterans Hospitals. He thinks that we should alert all of you about this matter. [The editor does not have the details of this plan at hand, but our most recent past President, **SAMUEL F. COMMONS**, 65th Flight Engineer from Flourtown, PA, had alerted the editor to a plan for veterans to make use of the VA Hospitals for low cost or no cost prescriptions. Local American Legion Posts and Veterans of Foreign War Posts generally have this information at their fingertips.]

A large collection of letters arrived from our hard working treasurer, **WILLIAM H. "BILL" WILSON, Jr.**, 65th Pilot and past president of the association from Snyder, TX. The editor will get at these immediately.

EDMOND L. BOUTON, Jr., 63rd Radio/ECM from Laurel, MD, sent in his year 2000 dues. He says he can't remember when they are due, but then at his young age of 82 he also is not sure of his name at times.

TED writes that he enjoys the Newsletter very much. He joined the 43rd at Davis-Monthan AFB in June '47 when it was a part of SAC. He served as R/O on B-29s and later on B-50s. He quit flying in May '55 when the transition to B-36s took place. He felt he had flown enough hours.

TED says that he misses our reunions with regret but he has 2 other reunions that he attends each year and too many reunions are hard on the wallet. He expected to be in Tucson on another matter and God willing he hoped to see some of us there.

A letter going back to October '99 from **ANDREW BUROCHONOCK**, 65th Pilot from Stamford, CT, had his life time membership dues included. He writes that his reservations were all made for the Tucson reunion and he hoped to see us there. [We sure had a good time with **ANDY** and **DOROTHY** there.]

Going through his archives he came upon a copy of his bombardier's promotion orders and enclosed a copy in his letter.

These are dated 22 Oct. 1944. **EDWARD A. DALY**, 65th Bombardier from Ormond, FL, is shown to have served in the 605th Bomb Sqd. from Dec. '43 to Jan. '44. Then he served in the 604th Sqd. from Jan. '44 to Feb. '44. From 26 Mar. '44 to 30 Jun. '44, ED served on **ANDY**'s crew as bombardier in the 65th Sqd. He served as Flight Bombardier from 1 Jul. '44 until at least 22 Oct. '44. As of that date ED had 305:50 combat hours and 39 missions. He participated in strikes against Madang, Hansa Bay, Wewak, Hollandia, Biak, Wakde, Noemfoer, Manakwari, Ceram, Ambon, Halmaheras, Kendari, Balikpapan, Borneo, Davao and others. He maintained a Bombing Average of 93% in the target and led the squadron in the number of enemy aircraft destroyed on the ground - 17. [With a record like that I am glad you were on our side, ED. Are the 604th and 605th Squadrons correct squadron numbers?]

ELMER HANSEN, 63rd Pilot, sent **BILL** his 2000 dues and wrote, "Retirement is getting to be old stuff. Good for when it lasted but soon wore off. There is no substitute for good old clean work."

Please make these corrections in your 2000 Roster for **ELMER**. His first name is incorrectly listed as **Elwyn**.

Rt. 1 Box 207, Thorndale, TX 76577. The rest of the entry is OK.

Now enter the following in your Roster. A mix up has accidentally occurred.

ELWYN H. HANSEN 2521 West Philip, North Platte, NE 69101-6336. Wife - **PHYLLIS**. Squadron - 403rd. Duty - not known.

Strange as it may seem BILL also received mail and dues from ELWYN. In checking the Roster for his squadron and duty, the error noted above was discovered. ELWYN caught up with his dues and asked BILL to send him those issues of the Newsletter he had not received.

He too is wondering about our history book that he paid for many years ago at the reunion in Denver [Probably Colorado Springs]. He writes that had he bought a bond with his \$75.00 dollars he would be well ahead of what he is today.

The editor sent e-mail to LAWRENCE J. HICKEY, Associate member from Boulder, CO, and author of our long awaited history, asking if he had an update of the status of our book to be placed in this Newsletter. On March 14th LARRY responded to my mail.

He writes that he is currently "requoting" the book with the printer now as his previous contract had expired. Our contact ROLAND FISHER, 63rd Pilot from Lake Oswego, OR, has been in regular touch with LARRY who appreciates our letting him alone as he works everyday until 2-3 A.M. on our book. He says that he is a few weeks away from sending the book to the printer. He has had a problem with the 48 color aircraft profiles, but he has one more meeting with his graphics artist and that task should be finished quickly. He is in the final stages of writing/editing/checking. He hopes to send our secretary/editor the last two chapters of the book soon to help check/proof that material.

We have had promises and promises many times in the past, so anyone who is skeptical has plenty of reason to feel that way. This editor has a feeling that the book will get to the printers this year. He is keeping his fingers crossed that it just might be available at our reunion in San Antonio, but that might be cutting it a bit close.

The editor urges any one of you who has ordered this book in the past, to please make certain the LARRY has your latest mailing address. ROLAND, CHUCK RAUCH, 63rd Navigator from Punta Gorda, FL, and our President, MAX AXELSEN, and this editor have all agreed to help LARRY's wife update the mailing list. So if you know of any survivors of late members who ordered this book, please send any of us the addresses of such survivors so we may relay them on to SUE HICKEY.

MAX's e-mail is <maxi@stic.net>. ROLAND's e-mail is <irmrol@email.msn.com>.

CHUCK's e-mail is <crauch@sunline.net>. The editor's email is <cherrj@buffnet.net>.

Mail from ALLEN B. CHRISMAN, 65th Navigator from Kalispell, MT, indicates that he too heard about SANDRA SMITH seeking information regarding her father, JOSEPH THOMPSON, MIA from the 63rd. [See p 26 of this Newsletter.]

ALLEN served in the 43rd from Apr. '44 to Mar. '45. He appreciates the task the staff is doing in producing our newsletter. He doubts that they will make it to San Antonio this year as the reunion falls at the time when they have a great deal of company that comes to enjoy their cabin on the north fork of the Flathead River on the west boundary of Glacier International Peace Park. Several of their friends from Illinois plan to be with them sometime this summer. He writes that this makes for a reunion of their own.

Like much of the north, their area of Montana has had a rather mild winter with less snow and moisture than normal. This could pose a problem with forest fires this coming summer. He asks that we keep our fingers crossed for them.

When he received his Newsletter showing him paid up through '99, ALLEN B. CHRISMAN sent in a copy of his check showing that he had paid up through 2001. He assumes that we made a computer error. [No, computers are not human. It was a human error. We apologize for this.]

He is using a computer for the first time and his letter was printed. He said that his son and grandson are teaching him how to use that computer. He apologized for any errors he was making. [There were none, ALLEN.]

He and his wife, ESTHER, have lived in their home for 33 years and enjoy the old homestead. He has been giving his two little grandsons an idea of what it was like in the Air Force in the South Pacific. He finds them most receptive.

Like so many other places in the north, N.W. Montana has had a mild winter with not a lot of snow and rather nice temperatures. "Lows mostly in the tens and twenties with highs in the thirties and sometimes forties. No wind to amount to anything."

ALLEN says that he is not yet on the Internet.

CARL P. AVERILL, 403rd Radio Operator/Gunner from Endwell, NY, remitted his 2000 dues to **BILL**. Please note that his squadron and duty are not listed in the Roster. His wife's name is **DOROTHY**.

When they noticed that **ALENE NELSON** of San Angelo, TX, and widow of **ALLEN NELSON** 64th Pilot was not listed in the Roster, **JACKSON L. YOUNG**, 64th Gunner from Wimberley, TX, and **HOWARD K. ANDERSON**, 64th Radio Operator/Gunner from San Diego, CA, sent Bill a check for her dues to get her on active status again so she could receive the Newsletter. **ALLEN** was their pilot in the 64th. **ALENE** plans to attend the San Antonio reunion.

JACKSON also brought his dues up to date.

They relate this story about a mission with **ALLEN** as their pilot. On a mission in July '45 the pilot of the lead plane elected not to fly over the target. He flew in short of the target twice and fuel was running low. **ALLEN** radioed that lead pilot that he was short on fuel. Their engineer, **JOHN PRESTON**, was busy transferring fuel from tank to tank to keep each engine running, so **ALLEN** left the formation and headed to the emergency strip at Lingayen Gulf. The crew pitched out the guns, ammo and other unneeded equipment in preparation for ditching. They made it to Lingayen and landed with very little fuel left.

JAMES F. MARTIN, 63rd Intelligence from San Jose, CA, sent his 2000-year dues via **MAX AXELSEN**. He also included dues for his daughter **JOYCE**.

An announcement arrived from John C. Szabo of the opening of a Shop/Office/Museum at Kingman Army Air Field, Arizona. He is interested in knowing if there is a list of 43rd Aircraft Tail Numbers so that he can trace how many, if any, of our planes ended up at Kingman. The address is 15555 Main St. #D4-130, Hesperia, CA 92345-3466. The phone/fax is 760-974-4142. The e-mail address is <depot41@aol.com>.

Catching up and paying his dues through 2003, **DONALD L. "PORKY" SQUIRES**, 64th from Middleboro, MA, writes that he sure likes reading about "... all my buddies in the 64th and all 43rd members." He says that he acquired the nickname, **PORKY**, when he arrived in Sydney, Australia.

Eugene W. Modlin is seeking addresses of anyone who was in the 85th Airdrome Squadron of the 5th AAF. He has a 50+-year-old list of names of the members of the 85th, but needs help in locating addresses and phone numbers. In case anyone knows of such a veteran, please contact Eugene at 510 N. Sherrill, Lincolnton, NC 28092.

Bringing his dues up to date and enjoying the Newsletter is **LELAND J. MLNARIK**, Headquarters Radio Operator from Omaha, NE.

JEAN A. JACK, 403rd Pilot from Murfreesboro, TN, sent **BILL** a nice check for dues and a contribution to be used for expenses in publishing the Newsletter. He thinks the staff does a wonderful job and he enjoys reading it.

Remitting his year 2000 dues to Bill, **HAROLD KAHLER** 65th Bombardier from Kaukauna, WI, wrote that he had sent **SAM COMMONS** some photos of the President of the US and our Medal of

Honor winner, **JAY ZEAMER, Jr.**, 65th Pilot from Albuquerque, NM, together. He wondered if they were on display at the Tucson reunion for others to see. [Indeed they were.] He says that he was at Hickam AFB last spring and saw the Wall of Horrors at Headquarters.

LOTUS H. (JACK) FULTZ, 63rd and a new member to the association, sent **BILL** his dues to join us since our President, **MAX AXELSEN**, threatened to punch him if he did not join. He says times have really changed over the years. It cost him nothing to join the Seahawks in 1945, but it is costing him \$15.00 to join the association.

JACK says that the checks his bank provided him show a jet bomber and indicates WWII. This has annoyed him no end. His previous checks had the Air Force Seal on them and said WWII. These he did not complain about, but he sure has complained about his present batch of checks and will use them only until they are replaced correctly.

He writes that he will do anything in support of the Seahawks.

Jack's address is P.O. Box 164, Madison, IN 47250-0164.

JESSE FULTON from Blountville, TN, sent **BILL** his 2000 dues and reported that he has been having prostate problems for over two years and is still waiting to get over this. Although he missed the Tucson reunion he is hopeful that he will be up to San Antonio this year.

He says to let our President and golf chairman, **MAX AXELSEN**, know that he is getting his clubs in shape, as he wants his name back on the trophy.

THOMAS CASEY, 63rd Navigator from E. Sandwich, MA, was happy to receive his 73rd Edition of the Newsletter, but not too happy to see that his wife is a widow according to the 2000 Roster. "For the record I am reporting that I am alive and kicking, and have just celebrated 56 years of a very happy marriage." [We apologize for reporting an early demise, TOM. It is good to know that we were wrong this time. I am sure that **MARGUERITE** is relieved to know that you are still with us.]

TOM says that he has never attended a reunion. Something that he finds hard to understand is that in all of the years he has been receiving the Newsletter, he has only once seen the name of anyone he knew. That was Major **BRUCE ARMSTRONG** about 3 years ago.

He joined the 63rd in June '44 at Owi while serving on the crew of Capt. **JOE HELTON**. They moved with the 43rd to Leyte and on to Lingayen Gulf airstrip. He was hospitalized there, but his crew covered up for him and he rode along on 3 missions. He bundled up in a popped chute in the rear of the plane. He had started out to become a pilot but while in flight school at Marfa, TX, he had a beef with a visiting officer and ended up in navigation school at Hondo, TX.

His memory says that they had 31 missions. The last several were with Pilot **PAUL BRYANT**. The Bombardier was **BILL ZUCCO**. After **JOE** went to Headquarters and **PAUL** became the pilot, **TOM** "...pretty much filled in as co-pilot until I was put in the hospital."

They flew many routine missions and used their low flying skills to sink a number of enemy ships.

One mission that stands out in **TOM**'s memory is a night flight from Tacloban on a search and destroy mission. The account in **TOM**'s own words follows.

While flying up around Manila Bay we headed down to run a check on some radar blips, and Lo and behold the whole Japanese fleet seemed to be beneath us hugging the shore on the outside of the bay. This fleet was being sought by everyone. We had a quick meeting in the cockpit, and it was decided to send the message back to base in the open. We did this and headed home. When we arrived and prepared to land many vehicles pulled up alongside the runway, some of which looked very ominous. One of them we identified as bearing a general's flag by the hood of the jeep. Oh Boy, we are in trouble we thought. We should have encoded the message. As we disembarked General Kenney approached with a contingent of officers, and much to our amazement and relief he congratulated all of us, and announced his intention of putting us all in for some sort of a special award.

TOM cites another unusual occurrence. Their crew used to make a milk run from their base to Sydney a few times a month. One time while in Sydney, they were told to report to a colonel stationed there with some group. He informed them that they were to fly a C-47 back to their base and turn it over to a colonel stationed there but who was not in the 43rd. That Colonel would not accept the plane when they tried to turn it over to him. After their attempts to turn it over to a number of others failed, they decided to keep it for themselves. On days the crew was not scheduled to fly, they took the C-47 to visit friends of different members of the crew. In time they became nervous about the situation and turned the plane over to some group. He can not recall at this time which group that was.

The enlisted men on the crew were **TOM EUBANKS, LaVERNE MICINCKI, BILL SMITH, ROY MAYFIELD, JOHN SPRINGMAN** and **ROY PITSENBARGER**. The crew was number 34-J-2517. TOM CASEY has never heard from any of these men since 1949. This last contact was apparently at the wedding of **PAUL BRYANT** in New York that year.

Sending BILL his 1999-2000 dues is **PAUL W. BAUER**, 403rd Pilot from Dallas, TX. PAUL wrote that he could never seem to find a time when the registration table at Tucson was not crowded, so he did not get his dues paid there. He found the reunion great as they all are in one way or another. He and **JACKIE** are looking forward to San Antonio. PAUL also thanked BILL for all of the good work he has given to the association over many years.

ENOCH H. WINGERT, 65th from Palmetto, FL, has become a life member.

He says that there seems to be a mystery about the loss of radio operator **ALVIN B. ROWE**. ENOCH writes that he flew into Port Moresby in a C-47 during an air raid by the Japanese. The men were hustled to their new quarters and he was assigned a bunk in a tent that was perched on an almost sheer drop of about fifty feet. "At the head of the bunk was something like a two compartment tomato crate and there was a book on the middle shelf which I picked up and as I opened it, I found on the fly-leaf the name of Sgt. ROWE." It contained his address. This was quite shocking to ENOCH, as he knew ALVIN. In fact, his mother and ALVIN's mother were both members of an organization he believes was called the Ladies Aid Society. When ENOCH's mother and ALVIN's mother visited each other, ALVIN's brother, WALTER, would go often go along. Later Lt. WALTER WINGERT was killed in action over the coast of France while piloting a night photoreconnaissance mission.

Although he did not keep a diary or records and he does not know what happened to that book, he did write to Mrs. ROWE.

JULIA WRIGHT of Chambersburg, PA, and widow of **CLAIR WRIGHT**, 63rd Radio Operator, enclosed a letter with her dues inquiring about the Group's history. She said that they ordered and paid for their book at the Colorado Springs reunion. CLAIR is so disappointed that it has not been finished in a timely fashion.

She enjoys the Newsletter and tells the staff to keep up the good work.

Two more sending in their year 2000 dues are **STANLEY "BILL" SCHIRMER**, 65th Maintenance from Walla Walla, WA, and **BYRLE MILLER**, 64th Radio Operator from Zachary, LA.

CLARISSA McCLURE sent BILL a thank you note and check for his sending 43rd caps to her husband, **JAMES T. "MAC" McCLURE**, 65th from Suitland, MD. She wrote that MAC was pleased to see his name in the Newsletter and that his friends will understand why he has missed some recent reunions. Due to botched up surgery on an aorta aneurysm in July '98, he has been very ill ever since but is at home. She says that their son, JOHN, has been a great help to them in their time of need.

Not wishing to miss a single issue of the Newsletter, **MAX E. LONG**, 403rd Armament Gunner from Laurel, MT, sent **BILL** his dues through 2001.

He and **DOROTHY** took a trip to New Zealand this past fall. They made time to visit Mareeba, Australia, and went up in a hot air balloon over that area. He said they had a nice view of the area and the old airstrip the 43rd used in 1943. He was not in the 43rd in 1943, but it was a nice experience to visit the area where the Group was early in the war.

CHARLES P. LARRICK, 63rd Mechanic from Alexandria, VA, recently joined our association. His name, address, etc. appear in the 2000 Roster.

CHARLES says that he joined the 43rd at Bangor, ME, right out of mechanic's school just in time to be one of those who took the Queen Mary some 19,000 miles to Sydney. From there they took a train to Iron Range. It was on to Mareeba and later New Guinea.

He attempted to enter flying school in the thirties, but the two-year college requirement or an exam equivalent kept him out. Once in the Army Air Corps he passed the exam, but cadet schools were closed so he ended up in Australia. While on New Guinea one of his buddies from armament told **CHARLES** that he was headed to the States to enter cadet flight training. **CHARLES** wanted to know how he did this. He said that he simply applied for it. The next morning **CHARLES** went to the 1st Sgt. and told him that he, **CHARLES**, had passed everything to go into flight training and wanted to do so. In a couple of days he read a notice on the board that he was to report to a Major for an interview. In a couple of days he was on his way back to the States.

The trip back was on a banana boat from Brisbane and it took 23 days and nights to get to San Francisco. He ended up as a pilot on B-26s in Del Rio, TX. A week after the Japanese surrendered he was on his way home.

CHARLES remembers the day that **KEN McCULLAR** and crew crashed after hitting a wallaby on the runway. He says **KEN** had a great record and even Tokyo Rose mentioned him in one of her broadcasts.

While in the 63rd, he was a fellow mechanic with **BILL LAIRD**, **JIM STANDLEE** and **BOB BURTIS**. **BILL** and **JIM** managed to get assigned to a flight crew and wanted **CHARLES** to join them as engineer, but he decided against it. On their first flight the pilot, Major **SOGAARD** the Sqd. C.O., flew low on a strafing mission and the plane was shot down. [Although **CHARLES** says no more about this, there must have been survivors. **FOLMER J. SOGAARD**, 63rd Pilot from Centralia, WA, is a member of our association.]

ROBERT "BOB" W. WHITE, 65th Tail Gunner from W. Peabody, MA, writes that he read the diary of **COBER's** crew (Dec. 13, 1943 to Feb. 27, 1944) with much interest. He was on 3 of the missions described: Jan. 1st, Jan. 23rd and Feb. 17th. He enclosed excerpts from his diary for those dates as well as newspaper reports and a report by Asahel Bush, Associated Press War Correspondent, for the Jan. 23rd raid.

1-1-44 Lost a Day Somewhere

Seventeenth Mission. The target was Saidor. The mission was a milk run. Inaccurate ack-ack for a change, and no Zeros. We landed at 11:45 a.m. for 5 hours time.

2-17-44 Twenty-Seventh Mission

Kavieng was the target with Talasea as the secondary. Brady is back with us. When I test fired my guns, the left one ran away. I found that I could fire and stop the gun by using the hydraulic charger. Kavieng was closed (solid cloud cover) so we turned and headed to Talasea. We dropped our bombs and headed for home. We landed for 6 hours and 35 minutes time. Went to church that night.

[Out of order, as this is a big one!]

1-23-44 Nineteenth Mission

Wewak was the target. We pre-flighted the ship as usual. I helped Lt. Brown from Taylor's crew (we called him Little Brown because he was short) fuse the bombs. He was our bombardier while Brady was down in Chatters Towers instructing. I went back to the tail turret and test fired my guns. I found that the oil buffer setting was wrong in one of the guns, reset it and test fired the gun. It was O.K.

We arrived over the target at 11:00 p.m. and things began to pop, and I mean boom! First a burst of ack-ack blew out the co-pilot's window and wounded Tilly. Then the bombs wouldn't release and Gaston had to salvo them from the command deck. Another burst hit the bomb bays and blew up the main hydraulic tank. Two Zeros came in at the nose and a burst of 20-mm shells went thru the top of the nose turret and just missed Conklin's head. The shells exploded in the bombardier's compartment and wounded Tilly in the legs. Conklin got one of the Zeros. Little Brown was bending over his bombsight. A table about three inches above his head had about 60 holes in it. His finger was cut a little. Another burst wrecked the co-pilot's controls and damaged the pilot's controls. We lost number 3 engine and had to drop out of formation; in fact we got blown out. Then more Zeros came in. Some P-38s came down to help us and they did a swell job. Another burst of ack-ack got us in the wing, but the gas tank didn't explode or I wouldn't be writing this now.

In the mean time, I was busy and I mean really busy! Zeros kept coming in and in and in. I scared off 5 of them, but the last one was a persistent son-of-a-gun. He came into about 200 yards with all guns blazing. I kept pouring it on and as he turned away, started smoking. I watched him go down, pull up and then turn into the sea. Number 1 for me. We finally got away and poured on the coal for home. We fixed the co-pilot up and he seemed O.K. His leg was hit in 3 places and he was hit in his right shoulder and hand. The ack-ack and the 20-mm shells from the Zeros had ruined the bomb bays, knocked out the co-pilot's controls and damaged the pilot's controls. The hydraulic system was shot to pieces. You had to wear a bathing suit to walk thru the bomb bay it was so full of hydraulic fluid.

When we got back to the field, Kandik radioed in that we would attempt to land. Nieto and MacReynolds had to crank the wheels down by hand and practically take the nose wheel apart to make it lock in place. We were not sure if it would hold or not. Also, the hydraulic fluid was gone so we had no brakes. Gaston just about stalled her in and made a darn good landing. We stopped about 40 feet from the woods.

When we got out, there was everyone there from the ambulance, two crash trucks to the Chaplain thrown in for good measure, who by the way is one swell fellow. They took pictures of the plane but I never saw any. All 4 engines had holes in them, and both flaps had holes in them. (We had to land without them - no hydraulic pressure.) We counted about 200 holes in all. We left the ship and they towed it over to the Service Sqd.

I think that there is more crowded into a few minutes over the target than anything I can think of. The mission time was 6 hours and 5 minutes.

Here are excerpts from the story by Asahel Bush. He estimated there were about 50 enemy planes which attacked the bombers on the mission described above in such detail by BOB WHITE. The US fighters, Kittyhawks flying alongside the bombers downed 14 Jap planes. Lightnings downed about 7 while the bombers downed another 12. The number downed by the high covering Thunderbolts was not known.

Anti-aircraft fire badly damaged one Liberator. Its flaps were punctured, its brakes shot out, the hydraulic system pierced and one engine riddled, but it was brought back home safely.

"I didn't even feel the Ack-Ack strike us," said Staff Sgt. Marvin MacReynolds, of Drayton Plains, Mich. "I was at the waist window and was too busy fighting off four Zeros to notice what was going on up front."

Another member of the crew, Staff Sgt. Robert W. White of Lynn, Mass. the tail gunner, reported seeing two pilots parachute from two of four Zeros when they were taken on by Lightnings.

The bombardier, Sec. Lt. James Brown of Augusta, S.C. seemed the most pleased because his bombs hit the Ack-Ack positions they were intended for.

Radioman Staff Sgt. Matthew R. Will of Jamaica N.Y. looked the hottest. It developed that the moisture dripping from his hair and face was the remnant of hydraulic fluid sprayed upon him when the system was knocked out.

The newspaper article with a photo of S. Sgt. Robert W. White pretty much tells the same story that is related in those above.

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

JOHN ROSENBERGER who has been trying to get information about his father sent e-mail stating that he had a letter from **JOHN A. "DAVEY" CROCKETT**, 64th Pilot from Desert Hot springs, CA. **DAVEY** wrote **ROSENBERGER** that Sgt. J. B Young would be a good person for him to contact to learn about his father. **ROSENBERGER** wanted information about a Sgt. Young. The editor informed **JOHN R.** that we had a **JACKSON L. YOUNG**, 64th from San Diego, CA, in our organization. If this is the person that he is seeking, he did not inform the editor.

SANDRA SMITH, from Australia, has been seeking any information she can gather with regard to her father who served in the 43rd and was listed as MIA. Her search led her to Tom Dow who it turns out had an uncle who also served in the 43rd and was KIA. Their stories follow.

Sandra's father was **JOSEPH THOMPSON** of the 63rd listed as MIA on 3 Dec. '43. "The night of Dec. 3rd was a tragic one for the 63rd. Two planes on armed reccos reported near misses on Jap ships with no apparent damage to them. A third plane took off, circled the field, and due to a mechanical failure of some nature had to land immediately with full bomb load. The plane careened on landing and cracked up with the complete loss of the crew. My father's flight: Lt. **COLEMAN** failed to return from his shipping recco, and a search the next day for the crew proved in vain. The last person to have knowledge of the lost plane, was T/Sgt. **ATLEE SMITH**." The crew was apparently in a bomber numbered 0518S-14824E. [That sounds like a B-17 to the editor.] They departed from Dobodura Strip #4 and were headed to New Hanover in the Bismarck Archipelago on an armed recco mission. The plane and crew failed to return.

The crew consisted of Capt. **ROBERT COLEMAN**, Pilot; **KENNETH CASSIDY**, Copilot; Lt. **RONALD WARD**, Observer; Lt. **IRVING SCHECHNER**, Bombardier; T/Sgt. **PAUL MIECIAS**, Flight Engineer; Sgt. **ALBERT CARUSO**, Radio Operator; Sgt. **ROBERT FRANK**, Gunner; T/Sgt. **ROBERT MORGAN**, Radar Operator and Pvt. **JOSEPH THOMPSON**, Gunner.

Anyone with information to help Sandra gather additional information about her father should contact her via e-mail at <kcsdsmith@telstra.easymail.com.au>. Her first contact with the editor came through a James J. Smith of 981 Valleyview, Wichita, KS 67212. The editor put her in contact with **JAMES T. MURPHY**, a former President of the Assoc. and 63rd Pilot from Huntsville, GA.

TOM DOW is the son of **RUSS** and **IRENE DOW**. In helping Sandra with her search for information about her dad, he found that he was getting more involved than he realized. His uncle, S/S **ALFRED E. DOW**, served in the 63rd Squadron as well. His uncle was known as **ALLIE** to his family and 43rd buddies. **TOM** has much of **RUSS**'s military papers including original War Department letters, etc.

"**ALLIE** was on the crew of a B-17 F which participated in an attack on an enemy convoy in the Bismarck Sea near Lae, New Guinea on March 3, 1943. His ship ironically named **DOUBLE TROUBLE** was the only bomber lost (10 men), only other losses were three fighters (3 men). I have original Newsweek and Life prints of the story, along with the names and original addresses of the crew

of that [ill] fated B-17. I've also got an original copy of *DOWN UNDER*, the campaign book. I sure would like to get a roster of names to put with those photos, or a picture of the bomber *DOUBLE TROUBLE*."

TOM goes on to say that for the past 60 years they knew some of the plight of ALLIE but not all that they would like to know. TOM's dad, RUSS, responded to a query about the 43rd as did SANDY's father. This was through a newsletter about the upcoming WWII memorial in DC. The connection between the Dows and SANDY was made and since then several men from the 43rd Assoc. have responded to their quest for information. [The editor assumes that these connections were made through the Internet.]

TOM has decided to join us as an Associate member. The application, etc. have been mailed to him. His address is 1775 Bailey Road, Asheboro, NC 27203. Tom has 2 e-mail addresses:

<tomtom@atomic.net> and <motwod@juno.com>.

Any additional information that any of you have to pass on to TOM would be appreciated greatly. He may be passing on to the 43rd Assoc. copies of the materials he has with regard to ALLIE.

*****LAST ROLL CALL*****

ALBERT FISCHER, 63rd Crew Chief and Gunner. Albert died on Oct. 12, 1999 in Florissant, MO. He was one of our members who took the Queen Mary to Australia. Reported by **ANTHONY J. De ANGELIS**, 63rd Crew Chief from Sarasota, FL. God Bless!

HERBERT FRANK, a Past President of the 19th Bomb Group and an Associate member of the 43rd BG Assoc. from Hollis, NY. Reported by his son **ROBERT FRANK** who says his dad passed away some years ago but he had neglected to inform us. God Bless.

URSULA GISSONE wife of **KENNETH** passed away in April 1999. God Bless!

HOWARD D. GONGAWARE, Headquarters, died in April 1995 as reported by his daughter, **JUDITH L. McMICHAEL**, by e-mail in January to our President **MAX AXELSEN**. Her e-mail address is <Hamily@juno.com>. God Bless!

JAMES MAYMAN, 65th Flight Engineer from Pawtucket, RI, reports the passing of his wife, **PEG**, last December. God Bless!

F. GEORGE SICKINGER, 64th Navigator from West End, NC, died January 4, 2000, as reported by his wife, **MARY JANE**. God Bless!

GERALD R. SNYDER, 403rd Radio Operator from Cincinnati, OH, died December 24, 1999. This was reported by his wife, **VELL**, who writes that **JERRY** suffered from Alzheimer's disease for several years. In September he came down with Varicella Zoster (shingles) and suffered badly with what his doctors described as the worst case they had seen. After two weeks in the hospital, he entered a nursing home and suffered severe pain until "God called him home. ... He was able to grasp parts of the October Newsletter." God Bless.

VELL has a new address. It is 5833 Headgates Road, Hamilton, OH 45011. She writes, "Good luck to all the members."

DIARY OF COBER'S CREW FROM TIME OF OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENT UNTIL RETURN
Part 3

- Mar 3, '44 Scheduled Momote; bombed Alexishafen (40 phosphorus bombs).
- Mar. 5 Bombed Momote; flew down on deck most of the way, under 100 feet at times. Formation closed in nearly wingtips to wingtips to keep in contact. Bombed at 2,500 feet, land elevation 100-200 feet. Flying second flight lead - first flight bombs went off right under us, sure glad tail of plane stayed on. Jap had counterattacked and we laid bombs right down the Jap slit trenches.
- Some of the crews who had finished their missions (but haven't received their orders to go home) fly occasionally. One pilot, however, swore off flying extra missions after an AA shell came up through the cockpit and out the top without exploding but several of the crew were scratched with plane fragments.
- I went over to the EM's tent the other day and there were Fay's crew and mine all tied up in a poker game after payday. In a couple of days two or three of the dozen will have all the money and things will be back to normal until next payday.
- We have a little PX and Coke machine - we got a barrel of Coke syrup hooked up to a little refrigerator unit with a CO₂ cylinder for carbonation - pretty good for here.
- Another list of promotions came through and the amount of celebrating is in direction ratio, to the amount of spirits available.
- The new B-24s we got last month are flying every day. That really puts a lot of time on them in a hurry.
- The E.M. took pictures around their tent area and ours also. We will soon see how they came out and may be able to get some prints.
- Mar. 7 Our group is ready to move forward again to get nearer to our potential targets as our ground forces capture new airfield sites and make them safe. Our skeleton crew flew the first load of material from Dobo to Nadzab today.
- Mar. 8 Bombed Momote. Today they allowed us to break formation after dropping bombs and strafed targets of opportunity. Jim was checked out as first pilot.
- Mar. 12 Loaded up and flew to Nadzab in the morning and picked an area and pitched our tent under a giant Banyon tree. We cut the small trees and brush in the officer tent area but we still have good shade from the large trees. Zastrow's crew is next to ours.
- Mar. 14 Bombed runway at Tadjji 80 miles north of Wewak. Some Zekes in area but we had P-38 and P-47 cover. Several times at night a single Jap plane comes down the valley and our AA opens up on them and keeps us awake. We are off to the north side of the valley and our runway, also under the trees, so we don't even have slit trenches in our area.
- We finished clearing and burning brush yesterday and reset our tent, then dug a division ditch around three sides to keep water from running over our dirt floor.
- Mar. 18 Bombed and sank a medium "6,000" ton freighter off Wewak. Some AA still comes up from the Wewak area when we get close.
- Tulig has his 300 hours finished and Captain Ed Hirst, the squadron navigator, is now flying with us since Fay's crew broke up.
- Mar. 22 One night last week about 2 a.m. I awoke with some rustling noise a few feet outside our tent. A Jap raiding party had killed some of our cooks one morning last week just before daylight. The Japs had been cut off without food and supplies since our forces had leapfrogged over and around them. There must be thousands between Lae, Finschhafen

and Sidor. Anyway, my 45 was outside my mosquito net hanging about 3 feet above my head and I couldn't reach it without making noise. I was ready to dump my cot over if the noise got any closer but it went away. The next morning at daylight I got up to look around and there were they were - wild pig tracks on the ground right through our tent. Anyway I slept with my 45 under my rolled up OD blanket which was my pillow after that.

Bombed AA position at Wewak - no interception and only light Ack-Ack.

James Thomas, my former co-pilot, was on this mission and soon after he took his place on my right wing. He feathered the right inborn engine and motioned he was aborting. I didn't find out until I returned in the afternoon that he crashed on a landing attempt. The full load of 3,100 gallons of gasoline burned and several 1000 lb. Bombs exploded. The CO and I were given permission to visit the crash site while flames were still burning around the remaining bombs. I recognized one body by the distinctive jacket and possibly another - the rest would have been very difficult to identify.

I would hazard a guess that he forgot to take off most of his right rudder trim on the approach and when he cut back on the three remaining engines, the plane yawed to the right side of the runway and then he attempted a go around. With the full load of gas and bombs he gained about 200 feet and instead of salvoing his bombs he attempted a turn to the left. The plane fell off to the left and cut a 200-yard swath through heavy trees and tore the plane apart with two engines 100 feet from the main section. The CO and I didn't spend much time at the site since the fire was still burning around the bombs and several had already exploded injuring the rescue team. We made a complete circle as close around the crash as possible and returned to our squadron area.

Mar. 24 Had Jim and his crews' funeral today. Again I was pallbearer. I heard they identified 8 of the 12 bodies. Seven of my nine remaining crew have now at least 300 hours. I hear more complaints about the chow although Ed Hirst and others have made some connections that we can have a nice snack several nights a week between 9 and 10 p.m.

Mar. 27 Bombed supply dump at Wewak point through 3/4 cloud cover.

Apr. 2 The flight squadron grounded the three old lead crews (Zastrow's, Martin's and mine) to wait for our go home orders. The orders have already made two trips up to HQ but bounced back for some reason. The three of us were on the promotion list to Captain last month.

The squadron is bombing Hollandia and it is such a fat target with all those Jap planes there I almost want to get in on it. The Japs must have thought they were safe and we could not make the long trip.

Apr. 4 Capt. Martin, OPS Officer, and I were down at the runway this morning seeing our squadron off. Our fourth plane (second element lead) was 2/3 down the runway when he lifted off a little early and slow, the left wing dipped and touched the ground and the pilot straightened it up a little off the left side of the runway but immediately Martin and I saw a small flame at the left wing root and Martin gunned our jeep down the taxi-way as the plane bounced along to the left of the runway until it finally plowed into two parked and loaded B-25s. By the time the B-24 hit the 25s, there was a major fire at the left wing root and upon collision the fire spread rapidly. By the time Martin and I were within 100 yards of the wrecked mess, the co-pilot of the plane came running away from the fire and he jumped into the jeep with us, and we made a quick turn as near the fire as we could to see if we could rescue anyone. By this time all three planes were engulfed in fire and a rescue

squad had picked up five other crewmembers. The co-pilot transferred to one of the rescue squads. Although six survivors didn't look too bad at first glance (just sort of gray and sooty), when I visited them on my first day off (two days later) [and] when I lifted the tent flap and stepped inside, the stench of burned flesh hit me and I had to step back outside to collect myself and keep from being sick. Then when I re-entered the field hospital tent, all I could see were four bandaged heads with 2 holes each for eyes, one for the nose, and another for the mouth. All flesh unprotected by clothing had received second degree flesh burns from the 100 octane gasoline. At that time all burns were treated by applying a liberal coating of a very yellow greasy salve. Lt. Cole, pilot, was one of the four lost in the crash and fire.

- Apr. 9 Flying again. Scheduled for Wewak but had 100% cloud cover so bombed Hansa Bay AA position. I was leading the group but on the way from Wewak to Hansa Bay we went around a cloud on one side and Capt. Thompson (sp?), 67th Squadron leader, went around the other way and since he was already on his bomb run, I fishtailed our squadron and dropped back and down a little to give Art, our bombardier, a smooth bomb run. Just about the time Thompson dropped his bombs, he got hit on his left inboard engine and it burst into flames. He seemed to get the fire extinguished but smoke was pouring out as we dropped our bombs on the Ack-Ack position. Thompson told his squadron to go on; he would either try to fly home or ditch. His plane was slowly losing altitude as our squadron made a wide arc and just as his plane was getting down to some 4,000 - 5,000 feet clouds, the plane blew up. Capt. Thompson was a classmate of mine at advanced twin engine school at Blytheville, Arkansas.
That gun battery was very accurate and had shot down numerous planes even though previous bombing had neutralized most worthwhile targets in the area. Our plane had one or two holes but five of our six planes had damage. We had real satisfaction when we saw our bomb damage pictures. Art had hit the gun revetment area dead center with 24 250-lb. bombs and our second flight right behind us did the same. The (24 X 6) = 144 250-lb. bombs had completely leveled the 3 gun walled revetment area.
- Apr. 12 Bombed Hollandia today. A lone B-24 was flying half way between the 43rd and 90th Group. About 10 Zeros made a follow-the-leader pass at him and they must have hit his controls; he nosed straight down into a lake. There were 20 - 30 Zeros in the area and Ack-Ack was fairly accurate even though we didn't get hit.
- Apr. 13 Went down [to the runway] to sweat the squadron off and B-24 002 was short a co-pilot so I filled in and bombed Dagua.
- Apr. 15 I was so tired and stiff from playing softball yesterday that I went to bed at 7:30 and slept right through until they woke me up to fly this morning. Flew right wing with a new crew today, bombed Tadj. The pilot needs experience with full, heavy loads.
I now have 336 hours combat time. The Doc just told me I'm not flying combat for the next two days.
- Apr. 16 It rained so hard last night that I nearly floated out the tent so I figured the safest place was in my sack. This morning we slopped our way through a foot or so of mud. There were only three to four inches of mud in the mess hall.
- Apr. 16-23 Flew down to Moresby-Townsville-Brisbane (Archer Field) with old B-24 #827; brought back #991.

- Apr. 24 My crew left on 22nd for R&R but they got stuck in Moresby where I caught up with them and found a C-54 going to Townsville and we all got a ride. Flew to Brisbane the next day and we split up; officers going to Southport, EM to Coolangotta.
- Apr. 25 Ed Hirst, our squad navigator, and I checked all the various army supply depots here in Brisbane trying to get replacement watches and flying jackets. We talked to a lot of people but ended up in one big circle. We did see an old friend who came across with us but who got sick in New Guinea and is now Adjutant in a replacement camp. We were supposed to have checked into the rest camp yesterday but will put it off until tomorrow.
- May 1 Leave cancelled and some of us got back to Nadzab on May 2 and the rest on May 3.
- May 3 Were notified our footlockers and everything shipped by boat was in Moresby. OPS gave me old B-24 #901 and we flew to Moresby (Jackson Strip) to claim our belongings. The supply people at Moresby had removed all GI issue items from our footlockers. That might have been permissible for the E.M., but the officers had paid for some of the items removed. I gave a colored supply lieutenant a bad time over it but it really wasn't his fault.
- May 4 Our crew's R&R orders were on again so we flew B-24 #070 from Nadzab to (Jackson) Port Moresby then waited for a ride to Townsville, finally got a ride to Townsville, then our plane landed at a small airport 1000 miles north of Brisbane and we took the train to Brisbane and finally arrived at our rest camp the "Ladoma Hotel" at Southport, Queensland, Australia yesterday the 11th. Today we took a quick dip in the ocean but May here is November in the States. The Aussies pretend they never get cold so they have no central heating systems in their buildings. However, when we get out into sunlight it is nice and warm. This cool air is invigorating and we played touch football. This rest camp is run by the A.R.C. (American Red Cross.) We have very good food and even Cokes sometimes.
- May 16 The Navy has a hotel down the road and we visit each other's events. One morning the three of us, Tulig, Ed, and I, signed out for fishing gear and got some bait and went down to the jetty to do some fishing. Our catch was very impressive, one little four inch baby "something" for our complete morning's effort.
- June 10-16 I went out to the airfield to see if I could arrange to fly a plane back north instead of bumming a ride on some transport and get stuck again in some out of the way airport. I had a new night fighter "Black Widow" all line up until some joker decided a Bomber Command pilot couldn't fly a Fighter Command aircraft. We spent a whole week hitching rides back to New Guinea. One was General MacArthur's B-17 private plane from Townsville to Port Moresby and the final hop to Nadzab in a B-25.
- June 16 Today was quite an occasion. We finally made it back to the squadron and we have been taking a lot of kidding. We only recognize about half the personnel with so many replacements. The old crews keep yelling "replacement" or "new crew" every time they see us. I also flew a plane for the first time in about six weeks on an engineering test hop. Letters from home are one of the most important things for us and I had 16 waiting for me. One of the next important things here is everyone has to do their own washing and competition

for the home made oil drum boilers is acute, so I start early in the morning and get there first. The only problem the first one has to build the fire under the boiler. Each tent has a clothesline so there isn't much competition for hanging up clothes.

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

Now that I am older, here's what I've discovered:
I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it.
My wild oats have turned into prunes and All Bran.
I finally got my head together; now my body is falling apart.
Funny, I don't remember being absent minded.
All reports are in; life is now officially unfair.
If all is not lost, where is it?
It is easier to get older than it is to get wiser.
Some days you're the dog; some days you're the hydrant.
I wish the buck would stop here; I sure could use a few.
It's hard to make a comeback when you haven't been anywhere.
The only time the world beats a path to your door is when you're in the bathroom.
The only difference between a rut and a grave is the depth.
These days I spend a lot of time thinking about the hereafter. I go somewhere to get something and then wonder what I'm here after.

If at first you don't succeed, sky diving is not for you.

A young lad's father gave him a good thrashing for pushing the outhouse over into the creek. The lad told his father that George Washington cut down his father's cherry tree, and he did not whip George. The father replied, "George's father was not in the cherry tree."

Respectively Submitted – Jim Cherkauer, Secretary/Editor

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

BRING YOUR NAMETAG WITH YOU TO THE REUNION.

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

The Newsletter is published 4 times each year – January, April, July and October. If you have any news 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.