



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

**NEWSLETTER 75th EDITION  
JULY 2000**



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

At long last, a memorial to honor veterans of WWII is assured. The goal of \$100,000,000 (that's 100 million) has been met and ground breaking should start very soon. Final design is under study and the actual construction will start soon thereafter. May, of this year, was the deadline for fund raising. Fortunately, corporate America, and veterans' organizations, such as the VFW, were able to assure the necessary financing.

On learning that the 90<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group had contributed \$2000.00 to the American Battle Monuments Commission (charged with building the monument) we polled our directors and officers who all agreed to donate to the monument. Most, poker players perhaps, said "Let's raise the 90<sup>th</sup> by \$500.00." Eldon "Bud" Lawson sent an extra \$50.00 to the pot, and so we exceeded our "brothers in arms," the 90<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group! The monument will be an appropriate symbol in recognition of all those that served our nation in WWII. In my judgment, these folks are of the greatest generation. Believe it!

**Eulogy for a Veteran**

Do not stand at my grave and weep, I am not there, I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow, I am the diamonds glint on the snow.  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain, I am the gentle Autumn rain.  
When you awaken in the morning's hush, I am the swift uplifting rush  
Of quiet birds in circled flight, I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry, I am not there ... I do not die.

**Author unknown**

\*\*\*\*\* FROM WILLIAM H. WILSON, Jr., TREASURER \*\*\*\*\*

# FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 01-10-1999 TO 12-31-1999

## INCOME

Dues	5,554.00
Life Membership	2,475.00
Donation	332.00
Interest	2,088.00
PX	1,349.00
E-mail	75.00
Tucson Loan Repay	1,500.00
Tucson Reunion	4,042.61

**TOTAL** 17,415.61

**PROFIT 1999** 6,549.22

## NET

01-01-99 Starting Balance	20,485.01
12-31-99 Balance	27,034.23
12-03-99 Snyder National Bank	27,034.23
CD Canyon Investment Co.	30,000.00

**NET WORTH** 57,034.23

## EXPENSES

Printing	4,879.68
Postage	1,554.33
PX Supplies	828.87
Office Supplies	285.01
Telephone	273.29
CPA Tax Returns	150.00
Help & Leased Equipment	1,209.98
Gifts at Reunion	185.23
Advance - San Antonio	1,500.00

**TOTAL** 10,866.39

# 43<sup>rd</sup> BOMB GROUP REUNION OCT. 17<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup>, 1999

## INCOME

Advance from general fund	\$1,500.00
Reunion fees	29,510.00
Dues (year 2000 & life)	1,275.00
P.X. Sales (Hats, books, etc.)	1,331.00

**TOTAL INCOME** \$33,616.00

## DISBURSEMENTS

Hotel expense \$15,292.32

## Entertainment

Dance orchestra	\$850.00
Ladies entertainment	300.00
Friday entertainment	700.00

Tour of Air Museum & AMARC D.M.A.F.B	2,126.00	
Lunch at Officers' Club	1,984.00	
Busses for Friday tour	2,575.00	
Sub Total Entertainment	\$8,535.00	
Administrative & Miscellaneous		
Return of advance	\$1,500.00	
Registration fees refunded	990.00	
P.X. Sales	1,326.00	
Dues collected	1,275.00	
Equipment rental	251.45	
Miscellaneous	403.62	
Sub Total Administrative & Miscellaneous	\$5,746.07	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$29,573.39</b>
<b>NET</b>		<b>\$4,042.61</b>

Bill noted that **JIM THOMPSON** "Did a hell of a job!"

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

The terms for the following directors expire at the end of 2000. Their squadrons should hold elections for these directorships. Roland T. Fisher – 63<sup>rd</sup>. Kenneth Brown – 64<sup>th</sup>. Arthur G. Durbeck – 403<sup>rd</sup>.

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

It is with great sadness that the editor reports that our faithful and hard working reunion coordinator for so many of our past reunions has made his final flight to that hanger in the sky. **R. F. "BOB" WATSON**, retired Air Force Colonel and 65<sup>th</sup> Bombardier from Lebanon, IL, was recovering in May from heart surgery when complications set in and he departed on May 18, 2000. BOB had coordinated his last reunion in Tucson last year when he resigned this task due to frail health. BOB will be truly missed by so many of us who have come to know him and appreciate the unselfish dedication he gave our association. God Bless.

His gracious wife, **IRENE**, who also helped coordinate those many reunions, is carrying on and plans to be at the 20<sup>th</sup> annual reunion in Tucson. **IRENE** has worked voluntarily at the reunion registration table for over a decade. She will make her home in Thousand Palms, CA.

**ANTHONY J. De ANGELIS**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Crew Chief from Sarasota, FL, reports that he had reported the Oct. 1999 death of **ALBERT G. FISCHER**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Crew Chief from Florissant, MO, but no notice has appeared in the Newsletter. In addition the mailings to **ALBERT**'s widow, **CHARLOTTE**, have been discontinued. **ANTHONY** asked that we place her name back on the mailing list. He wonders why we don't have a policy to continue to send the widows the Newsletters? We have such a policy, **ANTHONY**, but somehow we goofed. Her name has been placed back on our mailing list as a person in good standing with the association. Her address is **50 Alpha Drive, Florissant, MO 63031**.

Our Treasurer, BILL WILSON, received from the National WWII Memorial a very nice thank you letter, a copy of which is shown below:

April 18, 2000

Mr. William H. Wilson, Jr.  
43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association, Inc.  
P.O. Drawer M360  
Snyder, TX 79550

Dear Mr. Wilson,

On behalf of the American Battle memorial Commission and the National World War II Memorial Campaign, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the members of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association, Inc. for the generous contribution of \$2,050. You have set an outstanding example for other organizations and have clearly demonstrated your strong support for the completion of a long overdue memorial.

Your support of the World War II Memorial will ensure a lasting tribute to a great generation of men and women who served their country in uniform and on the home front. It will also be a lasting reminder of the sacrifices that these individuals made for the cause of freedom.

We deeply appreciate and are very proud to have your membership as contributors to the National World War II Memorial Campaign.

Thank you again for your support.

Yours truly,

John P. Herrling  
Major General U.S. Army (Ret)  
Secretary

Many of us who served in the 43<sup>rd</sup> near the end of the war had heard tales of a 43<sup>rd</sup> B-24 and a Japanese night fighter colliding with both planes surviving the crash. Here at last is the story of **SMOKIE ONE/GEKKO**. **SMOKIE ONE** is our own **ROLAND T. FISHER**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Lake

Oswego, OR. **GEKKO** is the Japanese word meaning Moonlight. The story that follows is taken directly from pp. 210-214 of *FLYING BUCCANEERS* by Steve Birdsall and printed by Doubleday. The editor was not able to obtain a copy of this book at the Erie County Library here in western New York. It was cataloged, but the only copy owned by the library had disappeared some years ago.

*Night flight to Davao*

Meanwhile, the 63<sup>rd</sup> Squadron was still flying its missions to Davao [Mindanao Island, Philippines] from Owi and on the night of September 4 [1944], at about eight o'clock, Lieutenant Roland Fisher lifted the B-24D *Miss Liberty* off the runway. Fisher and his crew had been briefed to search for shipping south of the Philippines and in Davao Gulf, with Matina airstrip



as their secondary target. By midnight they had found no shipping, and Fisher decided to attack the airstrip.

It was a very bright, moonlit night, which the 63<sup>rd</sup> crews disliked intensely, but there was no apparent opposition as *Miss Liberty* began her bomb run at five thousand feet. They were approaching the coast and the bombardier, Lieutenant **HOWARD HAMMETT**, was taking control for the bomb run when the B-24 was caught perfectly in six or seven searchlight beams. Antiaircraft fire followed. But it was fairly inaccurate. Fisher felt the plane bounce as the bombs dropped and he turned hard to the left and dived to shake off the lights. He had just rolled out of the turn and picked up speed to about one hundred and seventy-five when he saw small flashes in the shadow of his plane, straight ahead. *Miss Liberty* was still nailed in the searchlights but they were coming from behind, and what Fisher was looking at was a Japanese plane coming in head on, shooting.

Fisher saw "the gun muzzles blinking and caught the outline of a plane. I started to call a warning to my crew when my senses told me that plane was going to take me head on. I reflexed and rolled the aircraft hard to the left and pulled back on the yoke. The fighter flashed by, clearly visible, and passed directly under my right engines. His right wingtip missed the lower right part of my fuselage by inches. I could see his aircraft very clearly in the bright lights and I saw his head, flying cap and goggles through the canopy as he went by. The plane was a Nick. [Roland has told the editor that in reality the plane was an Irving, a Nakajima JIN-45 Gekko, that is similar to a Nick or Kawasaki Ki-45 Toryu. Nick and Irving are allied code names for these planes.]

"I was still hollering on the intercom at the crew that we were under fighter attack and I rolled the plane back to the horizontal and stuck the nose down hard to get some speed. I think I was hitting about two hundred and was maybe at four thousand feet when I heard some pop-pop sounds and there was terrific, muffled bump and I went into an even steeper dive. I remember hearing the top turret swiveling but nobody said anything and I was trying to sort out just what was going on and read the instruments when the radar operator came on and said his radar was gone. By then we were down perhaps to two thousand feet and I remember my air speed was pretty well over two hundred and I decided to ease it back and discovered I had no pressure on my elevators. Again reflexively I snapped on my master cut-out switch on the auto pilot and began to feel for control over the elevators with the elevator knob. There was a brief response, I thought, but it did not last and I was still in a steep dive, still picking up speed. I could see the surf on the beach on the south end of Samal Island very clearly. It felt as if I was looking straight down.

"I remember then thinking 'Jesus, we are going to hit - I should push the bailout bell, but nobody could make it anyway.' While I was thinking this, I started rolling the trim tab back. The damn thing worked and we sailed out of the dive. I don't know how much altitude we had left, but I will never forget being able to see those damned waves in the moonlight, at any rate I left my power on and got her reasonably level using the trim tab and we sailed out of Davao Gulf and took up a heading for Owi.

"We lucked out going home. Those Pratt and Whitneys ran perfectly all the way and the weather was calm. The flight engineers assessed the damage and reported huge gaping holes, that our main elevator control cables had been cut, that we had no hydraulic pressure because of severed lines and the electrical system was erratic because of torn wires and conduit. We had three crewmen wounded, with masses of fragments of metal in their backs. From this we thought that we had been struck by a large shell causing the big holes in the bottom of the aircraft just in back of the bomb bay keel between the two waist windows, and also throwing fragments through the sides tearing out the cables, longerons and tearing a hole in the top. Actually it was cannon fire that cut the cables on the sides and blew the top out as well as wounding the men.

"It was all hard to figure out and we were more concerned with helping the wounded men than trying to repair the cables. The engineers worked hard with pliers and spare wire trying to splice the cables, but whenever I put pressure on the yoke the splices would part. We decided I should continue to fly home on the trim tab and that we would try to disturb the trim of the aircraft as little as possible by all sitting still. This is why we lucked out on the weather because I'm convinced I never could have made it if we had hit turbulence.

"When we approached Owi, control told me that they might request that I ditch because they had the entire day strike almost ready to line up for take off and they didn't want to take a chance of my crashing and blocking the runway. I reported to them that I did not have good elevator control and did not think I could ditch it, and we had wounded men aboard. So they agreed I could take a crack at landing. I swung the old lady down south of the island in a big gradual turn and got her headed north on a long slow final approach. We figured if we could get fluid back into the hydraulic system we would have enough to operate the brakes with maybe one shot if we cranked everything else down by hand. So we collected fluids in the customary manner of shot up bomber crews . . . grapefruit juice, coffee and water from canteens, urine and spit.

"On the approach we cranked the wheels down, but I did use hydraulic power to put down about twenty degrees of flap and lock them. I just kept on easy power and played the trim tab over the fence and made the best goddamn landing I ever made in my life. Right at the end of the strip I popped on the brakes. They lasted for a second or two and then went out so I ground looped it right in front of the palm stumps.

"Everybody was excited and kept looking at the plane. The two sides of the rear of the fuselage were intact but the top had a hole blown just above the waist windows and the bottom was shredded.

"Inspecting the torn condition of the bottom we found strange pieces of metal and glass sticking in it and only then realised that we had been struck by another aircraft. This was when I remembered a big orange boom I had seen off in the night and I felt satisfied that the twin engined fighter I had seen in the search lights had attacked us from the rear, collided with us and crashed. So we reported the mission as such."

On the ground at Davao a Japanese night fighter squadron was congratulating Warrant Officer Yoshimasa Nakagawa and his observer for destroying an American intruder. They had taken off to intercept *Miss Liberty* and were closing in when the cannon jammed and it seemed that the enemy bomber would escape. The Japanese pilot decided he would ram, and his propeller slashed into the bomber's fuselage. Nakagawa reported that the big American aircraft started to fall immediately. His plane, its canopy smashed, kept flying. His eye had been gashed by flying glass and the wind buffeting his face forced him to turn sideways in his seat, but he managed to control the battered plane. When the bomber started to level off again Nakagawa was about to repeat the attack, but the American plane reportedly faltered and plunged into the water. The damaged Japanese fighter landed safely back at its base.

Twenty years later Roland Fisher and Yoshimasa Nakagawa would meet, after Fisher read of the "loss" of *Miss Liberty* in a book about the Japanese suicide pilots.

Although the mission ended on September 5, 1944, on May 1, 1945, General Kenney pinned a DFC on Roland's shirt and congratulated him for "Knocking a Jap fighter out of the air using a B-24 as a club." Roland sent the editor a copy of the orders awarding him this very distinguished medal.

Earlier this year M. L. "SHAD" SHADDOX, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Friendswood, TX, sent the editor a document entitled "PILOT WISDOM." Since some of the points of wisdom it makes have appeared from time to time in the Newsletter, the editor decided it was time to print the entire document but he will try to omit repetitions. He apologizes if he fails to catch repeats.

## PILOT WISDOM

It's better to be down here wishing you were up there, than to be up there wishing you were down here.

You cannot propel yourself forward by patting yourself on the back.

If you're ever faced with a forced landing at night, turn on the landing lights to see the landing area.

If you don't like what you see, turn 'em off.

Any pilot who does not at least privately consider himself the best in the business is in the wrong business.

The only thing worse than a captain who never flew copilot is a copilot who was once a captain.

Good judgment comes from experience. Good experience comes from someone else's bad judgment.

An airplane may disappoint a good pilot, but it won't surprise him.

Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make them all yourself.

## ON RADIOS

Too many pilots are found in the wreckage with their hands around a microphone or holding on to a keyboard. Don't drop the aircraft in order to fly the microphone.

An airplane flies because of a principle discovered by Bernoulli, not Marconi.

## ON FUEL

Any attempt to stretch fuel is guaranteed to increase headwinds.

An airplane will probably fly a little bit over gross, but it won't fly without fuel.

A jet fighter in the air has a dual emergency: Low on fuel and on fire. A single engine jet has a triple emergency.

## ON WEATHER

A thunderstorm is nature's way of saying "Up yours."

A terminal forecast is a horoscope with numbers.

Three things kill young pilots in Alaska: weather, weather and weather.

## ON LANDINGS

Landing - a controlled midair collision with a planet.

Takeoffs are optional. Landings are mandatory.

The first thing a good pilot does after making a gear up landing is to put the gear handle down.

A "good" landing is one which you can walk away from. A "great" landing is one which lets you use the airplane another time.

The probability of survival is equal to the angle of arrival.

There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing; unfortunately, no one knows what they are.

Try to keep the number of landings equal to the number of your takeoffs.

## SAGE WISDOM

Things that do you no good in aviation: Altitude above you, runway behind you, fuel in the truck, half a second in history, approach plates in the car, the airspeed you don't have.

If you push the stick forward, the houses get bigger. If you pull the stick back, they get smaller. (Unless you keep pulling the stick back, then they get bigger again.)

It's best to keep the pointed end going forward as much as possible.

Flying is not dangerous; crashing is dangerous.

The propeller is just a big fan in the front of the plane to keep the pilot cool. Want proof? Make it stop; then watch the pilot break out into a sweat.

Always remember, you fly an airplane with your head, not your hands.

Never let an airplane take you somewhere your brain didn't get five minutes earlier.

Those who hoot with the owls at night should not fly with the eagles by day.

Trust your captain, but keep your seat belt securely fastened.

Aviation is not so much a profession as it is a disease.

It's easy to make a small fortune in aviation. You start with a large fortune.  
 A fool and his money are soon flying more airplane than he can handle.  
 Remember you're always a student in an airplane.  
 Keep looking around, there is always something you've missed.  
 Gravity never loses - the best you can hope for is a draw!  
 If God had meant man to fly, He would have given him more money.  
 The male pilot is a poor, confused soul. He talks about women when he's in an airplane ... and  
 talks about airplanes when he is with a woman.  
 Fly it until the last piece stops moving.  
 Hovering is for pilots who love to fly but have no place to go.  
 Helicopters can't really fly - they're just so ugly that the earth repels them.

**F. NEAL FUGATE**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Rancho Bernardo, CA, has sent the editor a nice letter with several pages copied from the *AIR FORCE TIMES*. They all are with regard to the many claims that have been made as to which pilot and crew made the last combat mission against Japan.

The *AIR FORCE TIMES* ran a series of articles called "Stake Your Claim" for those who wanted to claim they were the last to participate in a combat mission in WWII, more specifically against Japan.

In the Oct. 16, 1963 issue the claim was made by Maj. Ernest B. Howey, a navigator from the 315<sup>th</sup> Bomber Wing of the 20<sup>th</sup> AAF, that their plane took off at 1637 hours on August 14, 1945. The wing was on a mission from Guam to the NIPPON OIL CO. refinery near Akita, Japan. There were 31 B-29s from this wing on that mission. His claim is backed by Maj. Grover C. Walker who was also on that 17 hour mission that landed on Guam hours after Pres. Harry Truman had announced that the Japanese had accepted unconditional surrender. Their planes took off at 1637 hours on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August. Their claims lay to rest that of Maj. Richard F. Brown who led a fighter attack on Singapore Harbor on Aug. 13, 1945. His claim had been attested to in the September 25, 1963 issue of the *AIR FORCE TIMES*.

Now the magazine had established its rules for this claim and it had to be based on takeoff time and not landing time. This point is a major bone of contention by anyone who thinks that the latter should be the determining factor. He says this with a good sense of humor.

In the Nov. 13, 1963 issue of that magazine Lt. Col. Anthony B. Cosola, a navigator backs the claim made by the previous two crewmen. He says that they were on their way home from that mission when they received word that the war had ended.

In the Dec. 18, 1963 issue of the *AIR FORCE TIMES*, **F. NEAL FUGATE** makes his claim. He said that the 63<sup>rd</sup> Sqd. 43<sup>rd</sup> BG of the 5<sup>th</sup> AAF had perhaps 3 or 4 planes on missions the night of Aug. 14 and morning of August 15, 1945. They took off for Ie Shima on their usual mission to seek and destroy enemy shipping. The 63<sup>rd</sup> Intelligence records show that 3 of their B-24s took off that night. **F. NEAL** took off at 1938 hours, which is later than the claims by the B-29 crewmen.

There have been other claims made in other books about WW II. Even the 8<sup>th</sup> AAF lays claim to this record. Some of its personnel claim that it put 400 B-29s in the air that night. That is an interesting claim.

Statisticians in the 20<sup>th</sup> AAF claim that a Lt. James W. Frey's crew dropped its bombs on Akita just 5.5 hours before Pres. Truman announced the Japanese had surrendered. They say that the last B-29 to return to Guam after that mission was *The Uninvited* piloted by Capt. Daniel Q. Trusk.

In the Jan. 15, 1964 issue of the magazine Col. Howard J. Fry claims that he took off at 1826 hours. He was in the 502nd Group of the 315<sup>th</sup> Wing. He says that the 502<sup>nd</sup> was the last group to take off on that mission. The magazine gives **FUGATE**'s crew the title of being last one to be in combat against the Japanese in the war, but the way is open for other claims that might come later.

Copies of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Intelligence reports that **F. NEAL** enclosed with his letter show that 3 of their planes took off that night and that **FUGATE**'s was the first of these. One of the planes had to abort its mission so it is out of the picture with regard to this claim. Lt. **THOMAS BURWELL** and crew in

#812 took off at 2030 hours. After two hours of flying, they had to abort the mission and returned to Ie Shima at 0050 hours. LT. F. NEAL FUGATE had preceded him in plane #025 at 1938 hours as well as by Lt. P. S. CRESSER in #969 at 2018 hours.

FUGATE's bombardier sank a 2,211-ton cargo vessel shortly after midnight on Aug. 15<sup>th</sup>. It was one of a convoy of 5 ships. CRESSER's bombardier in a crew on its very first and last mission sank two enemy ships. On their bomb run at 0230 against the second Fox Baker, their plane took a hit in the tail from ack-ack. While circling to observe the results of the second ship hit, their plane was approached by two unidentified planes with blinking wing lights. One came within 300-400 feet of their plane, but the B-24 gunners held their fire. These were in all likelihood the last 3 enemy ships sunk in the war.

F. NEAL likes to make claim to being the last plane to land after a combat mission the night of Aug. 14-15, 1945. He landed at 0843 while CRESSER had landed at 0700.

Sending BILL a check for his 2000 & 2001 dues, WILBURN "JOE" ALLBRIGHT, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Andrews, TX, also wrote how much he appreciated the 2000 Roster. He hopes to make it to San Antonio this year for the reunion.

JOE recalls that when his crew arrived at Clark Field among the first echelon, the Field Artillery was shelling the Japs from the west side of Clark Field. Some of the men contracted with the men from the Field Artillery to borrow a truck and drive to go to Manila for concrete. JOE was given a bottle of 100 proof whiskey that he used to barter for 54 sacks of concrete to be used for floors in the mess hall and showers even though the sergeant in charge was not supposed to release any concrete.

He also recalls that Col. JAMES PETTUS, Pilot from Honolulu, HI, was a great C.O. He says that Capt. MILTON GUSACK, 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Surgeon from Chevy Chase, MD, doctored his skin and drained fluid from his knee at Clark Field.

Paying dues for 2000 & 2001, H. T. DOUG CRAIG, 64<sup>th</sup> Top Gunner from Roanoke, VA, wrote that he did not find ANDY ANDRUS, 64<sup>th</sup> Bombardier, listed in our 2000 Roster. [Our records indicate that he passed away in Jan. 1995. He was not listed in the 1998 Roster either.]

DOUG also sent along a newspaper photo of him in a doubles tennis match a few years back. He and his partner, Jack Miller, won the doubles title at City-County tournament at South Roanoke Park in 5 sets that year. DOUG says that he used to be a fairly good tennis player until a rotator cuff operation put a halt to his playing.

His number one sport now is bird hunting. He enclosed a recent color photo of him posed with about a dozen birds he had bagged. The leaves on the trees in the background are in their fall foliage and are quite a scene to look at.

HARLEY HAYDEN, 65<sup>th</sup> Gunner from Hannibal, MO, paid his dues and wrote to say that he appreciated the 2000 Roster and enjoys the Newsletter. In early February he was in his third week recovering from a knee replacement. The knee was damaged in the line of duty at Wewak, N.G., on Feb. 27, 1943, while on a skip bombing mission with Maj. FLETCHER and JIM HAYS. He did not realize he had been injured until a couple of days later. He was also hit in the feet and buttocks but was OK once he found that the oil was not blood and the turret was still attached. They returned safely from the mission although a major who came along for the ride and the radio operator were also hit.

He writes that he missed the Battle of the Bismarck Sea by 3 days.

HARLEY reports that his brother, KEN, is doing well although his wife thinks he tries to do too much.

JOHN PONTILLO, 64<sup>th</sup> Ordinance from Massapequa, NY, along with his dues enclosed a letter of appreciation for MAX AXELSEN's fine President's Report in the January Newsletter. He knows

that the Ground Crew members will appreciate those words. It made him feel good to be a member of the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG.

He also appreciates the 2000 Roster and the "... very good Printing of large letters that us old Ground crew members can read."

After an attack of sciatica, **ART TASSONI**, 64<sup>th</sup> from Toms River, NJ, writes that he now is walking with a cane instead of a shillelagh. He also sent along his dues.

**JULES V. POWELL**, 65<sup>th</sup> Navigator from Alexandria, VA, sent **BILL** his 2000 dues plus some extra for mailing expenses, but **BILL** credited him with payment through 2001. **JULES** writes that he will regretfully miss the San Antonio reunion since he is having his right knee replaced shortly before reunion time and he does not feel that he will be able make the trip at that time. He wishes everyone an enjoyable reunion.

"Whoops! I didn't realize I had gotten that far behind. You may not realize it, but us old guys in our 50's experience frequent memory lapses. Okay, so it's not a good excuse. I'll keep a closer eye on the calendar in the future." **GERALD M. GEIGER**, Santee, CA, wrote this and enclosed his check to bring him up to date with his dues.

**TOM DOW**, Associate member from Asheboro, NC, who joined our association earlier this year, wrote **BILL** to say that he was not sure how to fill out the application for membership he had received from the secretary. [It is a bit confusing as it really was not designed for associate members, but hopefully that will be changed in the near future.] **TOM** also wanted to receive a 2000 Roster. It was subsequently sent to him. [See pages 26-27 of the April 2000 Newsletter.] **TOM** reports that he served in the Navy from Dec. '73 through Jul. '78. Welcome aboard **TOM**.

In a phone call to the editor, **NEIL FAIRBANKS**, 403<sup>rd</sup> from Anoka, MN, informed the editor that he had come across an article in which **SANDRA SMITH** was seeking information concerning her father, **JOSEPH THOMPSON**, who served in the 63<sup>rd</sup>. As reported on page 26 of the April edition of this Newsletter, the plane and crew were shot down on Dec. 3, 1943. **NEIL** is about the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> member of the association who has alerted the editor to her quest. **SANDY** has been very active in contacting everyone and every organization which might be able to help her find out about the father she never met and perhaps find a photo of him.

Among those notifying the editor about **SANDRA**'s quest with a clipping taken from material from the National WWII Memorial Organization is **MARJORIE HISEY**. **MARJORIE** from, Midland, TX, is the widow of **ELWOOD L. HISEY** from the 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

**LLOYD "BREEZY" BOREN**, 65<sup>th</sup> Bombardier from San Antonio, sent the editor a letter he received from **SANDRA** of Bridgetown, West Australia. He enclosed his reply to her. This was mailed before he could have received the April edition of this Newsletter so he had no way of knowing that her appeal appeared in that issue of the Newsletter.

**MANUEL ALEXOPOULOS**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Aircraft Maintenance from West Lynn, MA, brought his dues up to date and reported that his Christmas card to his buddy **IRL WILLIAM LAIRD**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Crew Chief, whose last address known to the association was in Santa Rosa, CA, came back stamped "Address unknown." [See next article.]

He also says "Hello" to another good buddy, **JAMES J. CONWAY Jr.**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Aircraft Maintenance from San Marino, CA.

**EDWARD L. GAMMILL**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Crew/Flight Chief from Phoenix, AZ reports that the last address for **IRL WILLIAM LAIRD**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Line/Crew Chief from 3301 Yulupa Ave., Santa Rosa, CA, is no

longer valid. His Christmas card to BILL was returned with no forwarding address. ED made a search on the Internet but could not locate BILL.

Later mail from ED in late April has cleared up this mystery. Strange as it may seem ED left a message on a telephone answering machine of a Laird in Santa Rosa. He then wrote to the occupant of that home explaining that he was trying to locate a buddy of his from the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG in WWII. He eventually received a letter from a Mrs. Helen Laird in response to his telephone message and letter seeking the whereabouts of BILL. Although she is no relation to BILL, she recalled an obit for a BILL LAIRD in the local paper about a year ago. "Several people believed it to be my husband. It seems he kept the article. Enclosing it for you. We're sorry your search ended this way." It turns out that BILL had moved to Mississippi and died there. [See "Taps - Last Roll Call" later in the Newsletter.]

ED writes, "BILL was a very good man – the best 'Line Chief' the 63<sup>rd</sup> had while I was with the squadron (3 years in the SW Pacific). It was through BILL's letter to my WWII address (my mother still lived there) that I became aware of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association. That was in 1981. I was able to see BILL at the 1983 QM I Reunion.

E-mail from ED, before his computer blew up, tells that he had been in telephone contact with **JOHN GALYA**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Aircraft Maintenance from Torrington, CT. It seems that JOHN has lost track of his 43<sup>rd</sup> buddies. Having found ED, he asked for the forms to join our association. His address is **34 Allison Dr., Torrington, CT 06790**.

Incidentally, ED's name was accidentally omitted from the 2000 Roster. So here it is for you to add to your rosters. **5415 E. Osborn Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85018-6106**. Phone – **602-840-7473**. His e-mail address is <Edgammill@aol.com>.."

**ALVIN L. HAAS**, 64<sup>th</sup> Crew Chief from Des Plaines, IL, wrote to request a copy of the January Newsletter. He had a telephone conversation with **JESSE FULTON**, 64<sup>th</sup> Bombardier from Blountville, TN, and learned that JESSE had received a copy and wanted to know if ALVIN had read his. [Sometimes our Newsletter gets lost or misdirected. The editor sent a copy to ALVIN.]

**LELAND R. LOUGHREY**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Navigator from West Chester, PA, sent, via e-mail, a photo of the 403<sup>rd</sup>'s *million \$ Baby* #315 taken from another B-24 piloted by **ZASTROW**. Number 315 is flying off the left wing of ZASTROW's plane sometime in 1944.

Looking forward to making it to San Antonio is **P. D. "PERCY" ALEXANDER**, 403<sup>rd</sup> from Tulsa, OK. He says that he was all registered for the 1999 reunion when a couple of days before reunion time, he suffered a severe sciatica attack in his left hip and was not able to make the trip. He was not able to walk for about a week, but for some time now he has had no problems. He enclosed a check for his year 2000 dues.

**GEORGE R. TUCHOLSKI**, 64<sup>th</sup> Radio Operator from Cleveland, OH, wrote that somewhere along the way the information about him disappeared from the Roster. So add this to your 2000 Roster: phone 440-243-4194; ERA (40); Sqd. - 64<sup>th</sup>; and Duty Radio Operator.

He also made a suggestion that the editor has passed on to our President **MAX AXELSEN**. **GEORGE** suggests that the squadron directors use the Unknown Squadron listing on page 57 of the 2000 Roster at their respective meetings in San Antonio and see if they can't find the proper squadron for some of these men. That would surely be of tremendous help to **ELAIN PIERCE**, our 43<sup>rd</sup> Elf, in keeping the records current. Of course it is assumed that if the directors do this, that they will report their findings to one of the officers.

**GEORGE** wrote, "While in Florida last winter I wore my TUCSON reunion cap often ... and always half-expecting hearing your familiar voice!!!" This is in reference to the week after the Tucson reunion while the editor and his wife were touring much of Arizona with **ROSEMARY** and **KEN**



**BROWN**, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from El Paso, TX. We kept meeting **GEORGE** and his wife, **ANITA**, almost everywhere we went and all three men were wearing their Tucson reunion caps or 43<sup>rd</sup> caps.

Sending a check for renewal of dues and an extra contribution to the association is **EULAMAE MILLER** from Tahlequah, OK. She is the widow of **ROBERT L. "TOD" MILLER**, Headquarters Radio Operator. **EULAMAE** says that she knows that "TOD" would want her to support the association, as he loved the 43<sup>rd</sup> and all the guys he served with.

She also noted that she had read in the January Newsletter that **LELAND J. MLNARIK**, Headquarters Radio Operator from Omaha, NE, had renewed his dues. **LELAND** and **TOD** had served together for several years.

An e-mail report from **BEV MULLIGAN** says that she sees improvement every day in **ART**'s condition. As reported in the previous Newsletter, **ART**, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Delray Beach, FL, had suffered a stroke late last year. She writes that **NICK ARABINKO**, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Punta Gorda, FL, visited **ART**. They try to keep in touch and also talk to **JIM PETTUS**, 43<sup>rd</sup> C.O. and Pilot, from Honolulu, HI. **JIM** is waging a strong battle with his illness too. Doc **MILTON GUSACK**, 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Surgeon from Chevy Chase, MD, calls **ART** and helps to cheer him up and keep him posted with what is going on.

**BEV** says that despite everything, they really think that they will make it to San Antonio – God willing.

E-mail from **FRANK HOHMANN**, 65<sup>th</sup>/403<sup>rd</sup> Flight Engineer from Princeton Junction, NJ, reveals that he was pleased to find his crew named in the April 2000 Edition of our Newsletter. He also notes that on page 15 of that Newsletter **DAVID A. ADAMS**, 403<sup>rd</sup>/64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Bellevue, NE, relates how his crew left Hawaii in August 1942 in a new B-17 G. **ED** says that in the 5 ½ months he served in the 19<sup>th</sup> BG, he never saw a B-17 G. A check in the "holy bible" of B-17s reveals that "All told 8,680 B-17 Gs were manufactured between September 1943 and July 1945, when all production was terminated." So **ED** believes that **FRANK** and crew were actually bringing a B-17 F overseas in 1942. [The editor's source indicates that the first B-17G-BO had the serial number of 42-31032. Did not the 42 stand for 1942? It also has no B-17 serial number past 44 or 1944. Who determines these records?]

**ROBERT "BOB" W. WHITE**, 65<sup>th</sup> Tail Gunner from W. Peabody, MA, says that he has been reading the diary of **PAUL H. COBER**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from New Oxford, PA, with great interest. He says that he flew of some of the missions **PAUL** writes about. He also moved to Nadzab on March 11, 1944. His crew also bombed the Admiralty Islands on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**BOB** believes that **PAUL** made an error on the date of the B-24 crashing on takeoff and being destroyed along with two B25s on April 4, 1944, according to **PAUL**'s diary. **BOB** sent the editor a photocopy from his diary.

#### 4-3-44 Thirty Ninth Mission

Hollandia was the target. We had just taken off when I looked back and saw a ship out of control on take off. It ground looped and ran into two B-25's. It started smoking and then blew up. Two of the 1000 lb. Bombs went off and the 100 lb. Frags on the B-25's went off. Smoke shot up to about 1000 feet. All three of the planes were demolished. Five of the fellows in the B-24 got out before she blew. The others were killed.

We reached the target at 10:30 a.m. There was quite a lot of ack-ack, but for a change none of it came too close to us. Four Zeros came in at us from various positions but they turned out at about 800 yards when we threw some lead at them. We landed for 7 hours and ten minutes of time.



Of interest also is his entry for the mission on 4-9-44 Forty Second Mission – Easter Sunday Wewak was the target with Hansa Bay as secondary. Take off was at 8:00 a.m. We had 24 300lb. Bombs. The Target at Wewak was clouded in so we turned back to Hansa Bay. We started our bomb run and ran into some real accurate ack-ack. Two bursts came right under the bomb bay. We were lucky that the bombs didn't go off. Gatson told us that Taylor had been hit. We were flying on his left wing. He started smoking but dropped his bomb OK. We turned from the target and noticed that Taylor was headed down for a water landing. Then his right wing came off between number 3 and 4 engine. He spiraled down and hit the water. We went down and searched, but found no one. We got the ack-ack positions OK. I hope we got the bastard that got Taylor. Three planes out – two planes back. We landed for a total time of 6 hours and 45 minutes. Went to Easter services that night.

He says that the staff should keep up the good work on the Newsletter and he hopes to live long enough to read the 43rd's history.

One of our distinguished past presidents, **MAX OSBORN**, 65<sup>th</sup> Navigator from Sun Lakes, AZ, sent e-mail with information that **BOB WHITE** was asking about. *LUCKY LUCILLE* was a B-24 named by MAX's pilot, **PARKER FLOYD**. MAX says that he navigated many missions in this plane while piloted by **PATRICK J. FREEMAN**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Eagle River, WI. PAT informed MAX that after MAX had rotated home, the plane was used as a backdrop for many crewmember photos. He sent one of their old crew to MAX, after he had returned Statewide from Dobodura, N.G. It was last reported sitting at its ditch site near Milne Bay. [The editor seems to recall a *LUCKY LUCILLE* at Clark Field in 1945. Was it named after the one MAX writes about?]

MAX says that he purchased *FIRE in the SKY* for \$28.60 from the military book club. He rented *THE GREATEST GENERATION SPEAKS* from his local library. It is Tom Brokaw's follow up to *THE GREATEST GENERATION*.

He says that he and **FRAN** have their room reservation at the Hyatt and will see us in San Antonio. He writes that they have great fajita and tortilla soup at the hotel. He also heard that it rained in West Texas and wonders if that means no more DRY wit from Snyder, TX?

**NATHAN "JOE" HIRSH, Jr.**, 63<sup>rd</sup> from Georgetown, TX, sent **BILL** a check for his 2001 & 2002 dues. JOE writes that he was among the first of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Troops **ROBERT "RHETT" BUTLER**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Bombardier and Past President of our Association from Fayetteville, NC, called in 1981 to San Antonio when the association came into being. JOE says that has been listed in our Rosters as 435<sup>th</sup> Sqd. 19<sup>th</sup> BG all these years. In actuality he was assigned to the 435<sup>th</sup> in Townsville, AU, for training only. Then it was on to Torrens Creek and the 63<sup>rd</sup>.

He enclosed a couple of photos for **BILL** which the editor has not seen. One showed **BILL** and **JIMMIE SMYTH** in #551, **GOWRY** in #550 and **SMYTH** in #552. Some of them went overseas together in Oct./Nov. '42. JIMMIE and JOE were together at the University of Texas from 1936-40. They met again at Geiger AFB, Spokane, WA. [There is more in this letter that the editor is not able to decipher but what follows seems to be the gist of what has been written.] JIMMIE and a Lt. **BIRLEFF** were assigned to Wendover AFB as instructors while JOE with a new pilot, **MURPHY**, and copilot went to Hamilton AFB to Hickham AFB and on to Australia.

JOE says that in 1950-51 while stationed at Kelley AFB, **HARLOW J. HARCROW** gave him a 19<sup>th</sup> BG patch, which he has in a trophy case. He points out that none of the men assigned to the 435<sup>th</sup> Sqd. for training stayed on with them.

Associate member **HARRY "DOUG" TANNER** from Sulphur, LA, sent the editor a number of articles about him and his interest in WWII air force personnel, planes and events. He has a very large collection of photos, letters and autographs of many fighter pilots and bomber crewmen who served in

the war as well as other memorabilia. Among his collection are autographs of 32 surviving members of the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders, 4 surviving members from the *Enola Gay*, the B-29 which dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, and surviving members of *THE MEMPHIS BELLE*, a famous 8<sup>th</sup> AF B-17.

His collection includes 700 autographs from WWII fighter aces. He has autographs and letters from German Luftwaffe fighter pilots as well as British Royal Air Force fighter pilots. A friend translated the letters that were written in German. He has received from these various pilots' accounts of their experiences in the war.

HARRY is an associate member to many WWII Air Force Associations like ours. In honor of his enthusiastic interest in WWII airmen and groups, he serves as the President of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society Louisiana Chapter.

With the material HARRY sent to the editor are a couple of photos of him by a wall of photographs he has collected of WWII bombers, fighters and crews. He says that this collection is for historical purposes only and will eventually be placed in a museum. HARRY is not a veteran of WWII as he is of a younger generation, but he realized that our generation would soon be forgotten if someone like him did not collect these materials and stories.

We certainly appreciate what you are doing, HARRY. He welcomes anyone to contact him with information about WWII airmen or to see his collection.

**JOHN L. VAN AUKEN**, 65<sup>th</sup> MP and Ground Crewman, has finally found us and has joined the association. He says that he has been looking for a long time to find anything about his old squadron and his old buddy, **JAMES "MAC" McCLURE**. He finally found us, but finding JAMES will have to continue.

If his health holds out, he will make every effort to be at the reunion this year. JOHN says that he helped form the 43<sup>rd</sup> at Bangor, ME, and served from 1940-41 to sometime in 1945. His wife's name is **FLORENCE**. His address and phone number are shown below.

**6856 Fremont Drive, Columbus, IN 47201. Phone - 812-526-0557.**

Catching up with his dues is **LEO J. DENAULT**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Radio Operator from Port St. Lucie, FL. Leo writes that time flies too fast and he can't seem to keep up with everything. We all find that is true Leo. He writes that he does enjoy reading the newsletters.

**ROMEO E. FURIO** sent mail to our president, **MAX AXELSEN**, with a check for his 2000 & 2001 dues. MAX forwarded this to our treasurer, **BILL WILSON**, who forwarded the letter to the editor but not before removing the check!

ROMEO writes that he called Capt. **ALBERT F. PEPE**, 65<sup>th</sup> Armament Officer from Snyder, NY, whom he had last seen on Ie Shima in September 1945. He says that AL recognized his voice after all those years. AL did confirm that the C.O. of the 65<sup>th</sup> while stationed on Owi was **BARNES**. ROMEO writes, "People today don't know how good they have it. Thanks to us they would be speaking German or Japanese."

He wonders if any of the pilots he took out to test the AFC remember playing chicken and buzzing a ship in the harbor? The plane came so close to the ship that the sailors jumped overboard.

Although he writes that he enclosed a photo of the 65<sup>th</sup> insignia and wondered who was the "guy" in the picture, this did not reach the editor.

He sends greetings to **EUGENE MURAI**, 65<sup>th</sup> Maintenance from St. Charles, MO, and to Doc. **MILTON GUSACK**, 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Surgeon from Chevy Chase, MD.

**JOE C. STRONG**, 64<sup>th</sup> from Mission Hills, CA, decided that between forgetting when he paid his dues and failing to get credit when he did, the solution was to take out a Life Membership. He writes, "Uncle Sam left me with that much!!" He is looking forward to San Antonio.

**LeROY (LEE) HOCKENSMITH**, 65<sup>th</sup> Nose Gunner, has moved from his Carmichael address where he says that he has lived 30 years in the same house. He writes that he has not received mail from the association in over a year. You are back on the mailing list **LEE**. The Postal Service does not forward our newsletters no matter how recently one has moved. His new address is below.

**5715 Metropolis Lake Road, W. Paducah, KY 42086. Phone – 270-488-3315.**

It seems that **BYRLE MILLER**, 64<sup>th</sup> Radio Operator from Zachary, LA, has been making slow but steady progress in recovering from a couple of serious operations. **DOLLY** says, "It's been a long healing process and we've missed travelling." They look forward to seeing everyone in San Antonio.

**HAROLD W. DONNER**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Gunner from Tonawanda, NY, found the article in the Jan. edition of the Newsletter [pp. 20-21] regarding the first daylight raid on the Philippines as reported by war correspondent, Lee Van Atta, to be very interesting. He enclosed a copy of an article by the same correspondent about the night raids on Davao by the 63<sup>rd</sup> that preceded the first daylight raid. **HAROLD** received the article from **MILDRED HOWARD** wife of **RICHARD HOWARD**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Engineer from Hysham, MT. The article dated Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> Delayed [1944] appeared in **RICHARD**'s hometown paper at that time. The article follows.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur's avowed intention to return to the Philippines was given pointed and explosive emphasis shortly before 2 A.M. today. The first calling cards of the Southwest Pacific Command were dropped on Japanese forces occupying the key harbor of Davao by Liberator bombers of the Lt. Gen George Kenney's Fifth Air Force making their first attack against the island of Mindanao since April 14, 1942. The first American aircraft over the target was piloted by the youthful looking Lt. Grant Jensen of Kenosha, Wisconsin who has seen five months of combat in this theater. They never even knew we were coming, he said as he returned to his base. Lights were still on in the city, we could see the lights of cars and trucks driving around, and not a single shot of ack-ack was fired. We made our run on the airdrome and while we couldn't see the results we knew there were plenty of Nip planes about. This leader of what was potentially the most important mission in the Southwest Pacific and most certainly most symbolic of Allied intentions to return to the Philippines once and for all – was noncommittal about the whole show. It was as easy as a gravy run he said. We have flown 20 missions tougher and more tiring.

His crew included 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. **THEODORE HUFFMAN** of Landis, Wis., Co-pilot and **ANDREW KOTARA** of Monessen, Pa., navigator; T/Sgt **JAMES WELCH** of Lima, Ohio; and Staff Sgts. **ROBERT KENNEY** of West palm Beach, Fla., and **MARCUS MAYNARD** of New York City. Other crewmen participating included Lts. **JAMES BRADVORD** of Louisville, Ky., **FLOYD REDDING** of Washington, D.C., **JAMES BROWN** of Chicago, **ROBERT DONAHUE** of Glendale, Calif., **KENT ZIMMERMAN** [Pilot] of Woodward, Okla., **JAMES WATTS** [Copilot] of Bluefield, W. Va., **GEORGE BURHOE** [Navigator] of Houston, Tex., and **STEPHEN PERRONE** [Bombardier] of Philadelphia, Pa. Also on the raid were Tech. Sgts. **FRANCIS CAMBELL**, Jr. of Youngstown, Ohio, **FRANK HANCHARUK** of Brooklyn, N.Y., **MICHAEL McNAMARA** of New York City, **CHARLES DONAHUE** of Denver, Colo., **FREDERICK GIBSON** of Cresson, Pa., **RICHARD HOWARD** [Engineer] of Hysham, Mont., **JOHN AHERN** [Radar Operator] of Long Island, N.Y., Staff Sgts. **JOHN CLETO** of Oakley, Calif., **CHARLES NUNEZ** [Asst. Engineer] of Brooklyn, N.Y., and **HAROLD DONNER** [Armorer Gunner] of Lockport, N.Y. [Emphasis added. Erroneous spellings of names have been corrected where they could be verified.]

HAROLD says that this article covers two separate missions. Lt. JENSEN's crew was on the night of Aug. 5-6, 1944 and Lt. ZIMMERMAN's crew, on which HAROLD served, bombed on the night of Aug. 6-7, 1944. He says that their crew experienced the same conditions on the night that they bombed, as did JENSEN's crew the night before.

He goes on to quote from *FLYING BUCANEERS* by Steve Birdsall. "While the Liberators of the 13<sup>th</sup> softened the Palaus, the 5<sup>th</sup> began attacks on the southern Philippines to prepare the way for the carrier strikes. Kenny had wanted to begin operations against Davao, the second largest city on Mindanao, as soon as possible and had advised Whitehead to use the snooper B-24s of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Sqd. until he could provide escort for daylight bombing. The 63<sup>rd</sup> began their night raids on Aug. 5 with a single plane strike on an airdrome six miles north of Davao, and continued to attack the airfield and harbor area throughout the month, assisted by Navy Liberators flying reconnaissance missions. There was little resistance."

In the April 2000 Newsletter on page 14 there appears an item in which our President, MAX AXELSEN, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from San Antonio, TX, had recalled a mission to Davao on Mindanao, Philippines. He received two letters from members with regard to that mission. It seems that there was some confusion as to whether Lt. Weaver had been killed. An initial story in the January 2000 Newsletter came from GEORGE ANDERSON, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Blairstown, NJ, who reported that the mission was to Balikpapan, Borneo. MAX recalled the mission as one to Davao.

In his letter to MAX, GEORGE STAHL, 403<sup>rd</sup> Flight Engineer from Mechanicsburg, PA, supports MAX's report that the mission was indeed to Davao. GEORGE writes that the mission was Sept. 1, 1944. Pilot Weaver was killed and REGIS, copilot, "... went into shock and their flight engineer dropped out of his top turret and gained control of the ship. We were flying off their wing and I in the top turret, when they went out of control dropping down to a very near collision of our plane. The quick thinking of their flight engineer saved both crews from certain death."

"With our nose shot out and other extensive damage, we grouped together with two other cripples and headed for home base. The Jap fighters tried to finish us off - when they left us, we were out of ammo and our guns frozen from constant firing. I can still remember a squadron of "Jolly Rogers" streaking by us leaving us to our fate - luckily we made it back. Our nose gunner, severely wounded, was taken to an aid station. Ironically, someone stole his flight jacket en route. He later received the Silver Star and a plate in his head, which led to his early death."

George enclosed a copy of a Letter of Commendation he received for that mission. It is dated 11 May 1945 and is signed by George C. Kenney, General, United States Army, Commander. [That sure took a long time to be awarded.]

In a second letter to MAX with a copy to GEORGE ANDERSON, ERNEST N. MORGAN, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Albuquerque, NM, writes, "I may owe my present existence to George's flight engineer. George's flight engineer says he went on a mission to Balikpapan while George was in the hospital, and was awarded the DFC for his quick reaction when the pilot was shot. It seems surely that he would be aware of which mission earned him a DFC. A mission to Mindanao took 11 hours; Balikpapan would take about 14 hours. I did not go on the mission to Balikpapan, but recall reports that it was exceptionally long and tough."

On Sept 1, 1944, I flew the #3 plane from Owi to Licanan. This was one of the first raids to the Philippines. Anti aircraft and interception was intense and after the target the pilot in the #2 plane was killed by a shot just under his flak vest. The plane pulled over and above me, and dipped its left wing into my #3 prop. It then pulled up, as I went down as quickly as I could. I don't recall any exceptional damage to my #3, but the formation spread out and broke up. Debriefing after the mission was somewhat confused by the casualty and other damages. I think my crew shot down a Jap Zero, but I was too excited to let them have the time to watch, and it was not confirmed.

For some reason, my notes say it was Lt. John Shields that was killed, but this is not possible; John Shields was Norris Weaver's bombardier. Now, I don't know what happened to Shields. It seems George's flight engineer kept them from crashing both of us, but I don't know his name. I'm glad he was there.

[The telling of these stories demonstrates rather clearly how "facts" become slightly changed or mixed up over the years. Despite that, the gist of the story remains the same.]

ERNEST has included his e-mail address <Golucke@cs.com>

**ARLENE ROTH** wife of **ROBERT "BOB" ROTH**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Gunner from Redlands, CA, sent a card to **DORIS** and **ROBERT H. BUTLER**, Past President and 63<sup>rd</sup> Bombardier, who in turn sent it on to our good treasurer, **BILL**, who relayed it to the editor. Sadly she reports that **BOB** had a devastating second stroke on Feb. 1<sup>st</sup> and has been in a skilled nursing facility since then. The neurologist has given him a poor prognosis as he is paralyzed on the entire right side of his body including the lung. He does enjoy friends stopping in to see him although he does not say anything.

Her good news is that they have a new great granddaughter who was born in February and who is healthy and sound.

She says that they have enjoyed being part of this association with such good people for so many years. She hopes that all have a wonderful time in San Antonio.

The editor is in a bit of hot water with an article on pp. 5-6 of the April edition of the Newsletter. It seems that he has made 4 goofs and **HARLEY HAYDEN**, 65<sup>th</sup> Gunner from Hannibal, MO, has taken the time and effort to point these out to the editor. If you review the April article, you will note that the editor was not sure that he was reading the original letter from **HARLEY** correctly. He sure hopes that he is reading this one correctly. He will quote directly the corrections sent to him.

1. "... **JOHN WOODWARD** not being in the 65<sup>th</sup> he was so an was one of the oldest an the best."
2. "I was never away from Bangor Maine except to go to gunnery school for 6 weeks an back to Bangor when we graduated. The problem was that no one an I mean no one notified us that we had been assigned to the cadre after the split of the 43<sup>rd</sup>. We had our return tickets an service records so sqdn. CO said we could stay with Sqdn an go over seas with the 43<sup>rd</sup> Gp. We all decided to stay with Gp."
3. "As being ground personel before gunnery school we all were yard birds 1<sup>st</sup> class until our old time N.C.Os gave us on the Job training."
4. "Every one knows that there was no gunnery school in Bangor, Maine an the date Dec. 1941 when we came back from overseas to attend gunnery school when we had not got on the Queen Mary yet." [The editor did not know that fact.]

"As to the mix up with Woodward's crew and Eberly's crew, I keep telling the Gp an our Historian that the Graves registration crew got the bones mixed up."

Although **HARLEY** said a correction was not necessary, the editor wanted to set the record straight with him and has tried not to misinterpret his corrections and goof again as he did with **HARLEY**'s original letter, so he quoted him as accurately as possible.

On Friday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, **DAYTON BLANCHARD**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Cibolo, TX and Cloudcroft, NM, sent the editor and the president an e-mail message saying that the Collings Foundation's B-24J, now named *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL* #440973, and B-17G *Nine-O-Nine* landed at the Alamogordo airport on the 27<sup>th</sup>. The local newspaper editor had asked **DAYTON** to do a feature article on the event.

**DAYTON** met the crew of the B-24 at 9:00 A.M. and became acquainted with the pilot Mike Walsh, the engineer Bill Strawn, and Bill's wife Dee. **DAYTON** reports that the artwork on the plane

was done by Bill and is "... reasonably accurate." He writes that lots of locals took the \$350.00 dollar tour offered in both planes. After the crowd had subsided, DAYTON and Mike sat in the cockpit while Mike reviewed the checklist used by the crew. Neither the autopilot nor the radio compass work. Hidden behind the autopilot panel is a GPS navigation system that is accurate within 50'.

They fly the plane manually at a cost of \$2000 per hour consuming about 200 gallons of fuel per hour. DAYTON wrote that after 55 years, he sure enjoyed being in the cockpit again. He found the entire crew to be friendly.

Bill took a photo of DAYTON's A-2 jacket with the 65<sup>th</sup> Lucky Dice emblem.

While DAYTON was shooting some photos, he noticed an elderly gent and his wife near the B-17. It turned out that the man had flown 77 missions in a B-17 in the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG. He had also flown 34 missions in the B-26 – the old cigar as DAYTON calls it. This gentleman, **JACOB G. ROBINSON**, lives at **943 Dora, Alamogordo 88330**. His phone is **505-437-0654**. He asked how to go about joining our association that he had never heard of until he met DAYTON.

In a later mailing DAYT sent the editor 5 pages of information about the special uses of B-24s during WWII. This was downloaded from a web site so the editor is not aware if these are protected by copyright so he will paraphrase some of the material here and in later editions of the Newsletter. The web site from which this information was downloaded is

<[http://home.att.net/~jbaugher2/b24\\_4.html](http://home.att.net/~jbaugher2/b24_4.html)>.

In discussing the B-24As, it mentions that only 9 of these were delivered to the USAAF between June 1941 and July 1942. All the other B24As were diverted to Britain or converted to Cs and Ds on the assembly line.

The USAAF used these planes primarily as long range transports much as the British did with the LB-30s. Two of the B-24As were used to transport the Harriman Mission to Moscow via the United Kingdom in September 1941. The last leg from England to Moscow covered 3,150 miles nonstop. One of the planes continued on to circumnavigate the globe via the Middle East, India, Singapore, Darwin, Port Moresby, Wake Island, Hawaii and on to Washington. The other returned from Moscow via Cairo, Africa, the South Atlantic and Brazil.

Two other B-24As were to fly a secret spy mission over Japanese bases in the South Pacific while en route to the Philippines. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor eliminated this mission. One of the planes was destroyed on the ground at Hickam Field.

In April 1942, Consolidated agreed to a contract with the USAAF to transport ferry crews home after they had delivered planes to the various theaters. The company formed Consolidated Airways or Consairways as it was more generally called. They converted early model B-24s, LB-30s and C-87s into transports for this airline. The editor saw several of the converted LB-30s at Hamilton Field that were assigned originally to the 6<sup>th</sup> AAF with headquarters in Panama. He had the opportunity while riding a bus from Hamilton Field into San Francisco for a most interesting talk with one of the Consairways pilots who flew one of those converted LB-30.

**CHARLES "CHUCK" RAUCH**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Director and Pilot from Punta Gorda, FL, asks that we change his phone number on page 2 of the 2000 Roster to **941-639-6421**. It is correct on page 38.

He also called to our attention more changes to be made in the Roster for his Bombardier **CLAIR H. BLACK** from Talmadge, UT. **CLAIR** is alive and well although recovering from knee surgery. Please remove the "W" shown before his wife's name, **GWEN**. They hope to make it to San Antonio this year. The correct P.O. Box is **730053** and their phone is **801-454-3706**.

**MALCOLM R. OBOURN**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Navigator from Vienna, IL, reports a new e-mail address- <[Mobourn@shawneelink.com](mailto:Mobourn@shawneelink.com)>.

A change of address for an Associate member, **IAN QUINN** of Hong Kong, PRC, comes via **HOWARD K. "ANDY" ANDERSON** 64<sup>th</sup> Radio Operator/Gunner from Los Angeles, CA. IAN's

new address is **Apartment 2/F, 32 Stanley Village Road, Stanley, Hong Kong, PRC**. His phone number is **28953434**. This has to be preceded by **011-852** if calling from the USA. His e-mail address is **<quinns@hkstar.com>**.

**ANDY** and **ANNE** spent 18 days in Northern China and Japan in late May and early June.

He says that he was on the crew of **ALLEN NELSON** while serving in the 43<sup>rd</sup>. Although **ALLEN** is deceased his widow, **ALENE** who lives in San Angelo, TX, plans to attend.

**ANDY** also reports a new phone number – **310-641-7770**.

**NAOMI SHADDOX**, wife of **M. L. "SHAD" SHADDOX** 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot, from Friendswood, TX, is recovering from a heart attack and bypass surgery. After a stay of over a month in the hospital, her progress has been slow but steady. We wish her a continued steady recovery and hope to see the two of them at the San Antonio reunion.

**HELEN J. BAUDER** from Omaha, NE, and widow of **WILLIAM BAUDER** from the 64<sup>th</sup>, has sent the association a nice donation "... to use in printing the newsletter or wherever needed."

**HELEN** writes that she enjoys the Newsletter and realizes that compiling and printing the 2000 Roster must have been a great deal of work. [**ELAIN PIERCE** the 43<sup>rd</sup> Elf and **BILL WILSON** our hard working treasurer are responsible for the Roster.]

Although she will not make it to San Antonio for the reunion, **HELEN** says that she wishes that she could as she and **WILLIAM** spent 9 weeks there when he started pilot training. She writes that she has heard that many changes have taken place in S.A. since 1941-1942.

Sending in lifetime membership dues is **GEORGIA De RUSHA** of Lakeside, CA. **GEORGIA** is the widow of **LARRY De RUSHA** formerly from Headquarters Squadron. **GEORGIA** asks that her copies of the Newsletter be sent to someone who would like to have them, as she no longer knows anyone in the association. **LARRY** passed away 16 years ago, but he really enjoyed them while he was living. She does recall the 1983 reunion on the Queen Mary as one where they had a great time. She thanks the organization for all of the Newsletters sent to her over the past years. We wish you well, **GEORGIA**.

Our surviving Medal of Honor recipient, **JAY ZEAMER, Jr.** 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Albuquerque, NM, and his wife, **BARBARA**, will be attending the annual reunion in San Antonio this year. We should all be honored by their presence.

Along with his 2000-year dues **JOSEPH R. ESPOSITO**, 65<sup>th</sup> Navigator from Malverne, NY, wrote that he flew in a B-24 named **LUCKY LUCILLE** on the crew of Pilot **MARCUS D. CARRELL** of Houston, TX. He wondered if this might be the plane that **ROBERT W. WHITE**, 65<sup>th</sup> Tail Gunner from W. Peabody, MA, was referring to on page 16 of the April 2000 Newsletter. **JOE** attempted to phone **BOB** but did not reach him only his answering machine. [**JOE** it seems that the 65<sup>th</sup> had more than one airplane named **LUCKY LUCILLE**. In the era in which **BOB** flew in the 65<sup>th</sup>, the editor believes the squadron was flying B-17s.]

**JOE** says that he has a photo of all of his crew by the plane with its name showing.

**JOE HARVEY**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Gunner from Kissimmee, FL, mailed **BILL** his dues for 2000. He thinks that the Newsletter is well done and regrets that he has to skip the San Antonio reunion due to health problems.

Remitting dues for 2000-2001 is **CLIFFORD L. MILLER Jr.**, 65<sup>th</sup> Navigator from Claverack, NY. He too says that the staff is doing a great job with the Newsletter that he finds interesting.



He noted some mention of crews being assigned their own planes and agrees that this was not the case in the 43<sup>rd</sup>. However, his crew, which was formed in Tucson, was assigned a plane, which they took to advanced training in El Paso, TX. They painted the name *BOOGIE WOOGIE BOMB BUGGIE* on the plane. [The editor hopes that he is spelling this correctly.] CLIFFORD had wanted it named *FEARLESS FOSDICK*, but lost out. The crew ended its training in Topeka, KS, flew the plane to San Francisco and on to Brisbane, Australia. He never saw the plane again.

The 24 Squadron Association of New South Wales, Australia, included a year 2000 calendar with one of their newsletters. It shows a RAAF B-24 on one side of the header and 3 RAAF Vultee Vengeance IVs flying in formation on the right side of the header. That is very nice indeed.

**Attention all you B-17 men.** An urgent request for INFORMATION comes from JANICE OLSON, Associate member from Apple Valley, CA.

**B-17 ERA INFORMATION NEEDED.** Were you or somebody you know in the 43<sup>rd</sup> during the month of January 1943? JANICE OLSON seeks information about events in the 43<sup>rd</sup> for the month of January 1943, for a unit history of the 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron. Information from other squadrons is also needed as many joint efforts occurred during that month. Information on other months is also needed, but she is concentrating on January in order to have a draft of one month of the history before the up-coming reunion. Mission logs, Form 5s, mission photos, camp photos, anecdotes, etc. are needed. Form 5s would be especially appreciated as she is trying to put together complete crew lists for each mission. Also needed are ground crew observations, diaries and memories. Contact JANICE OLSON: P.O. Box 1317, Victorville, CA 92393-1317. Phone: 760-241-3145; FAX: 760-242-0973; and e-mail: <B17Project@aol.com>.

Let's face it, the Internet and our web site have been big pluses in finding men who served in the 43<sup>rd</sup> both during the war and afterwards. Below are listed 3 new members all of whom served during WWII and found us through the Internet. If you remember any of these men, why not make it a point to contact them and welcome them to our association.

**WILLIAM W. BROWN** who served in the 64<sup>th</sup> from 1944 to 1945 as a Flight Engineer. He flew in 100 missions.

**31 Wilderness Dr., Fredericksburg, TX 78624. Phone: 830-997-1672.**

**BENJAMIN FINCHAM** who served as a Gunner in the 63<sup>rd</sup> from 12 May 44 to 6 June 45. His wife's name is **HAZEL F.**

**711 N. Elm St., Foley, AL 36535-1417. Phone: 334-943-5639.**

**JOHN E. GALYA** who served as a Crew Chief but he did not list his squadron. His spouse's name is **HELEN A.**

**34 Allison Dr., Torrington, CT 06790-3143. Phone: 860-496-8327.**

**WALTER I. "BUD" BLUNK**, 64<sup>th</sup> Crew Chief from New Albany, IN, has sent BILL his dues through 2001 and in a short note he writes, "Doctor says I can buy green Bananas now. I really enjoy the web site. Keep up the good work."

Pres. **MAX AXELSEN** has temporarily taken over the duties of recruitment for the association. He has been in e-mail correspondence with **ROSS JACKSON** who has now joined the association. ROSS said that he recognized just two names in the 2000 Roster, that of **KENT ZIMMERMAN**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from San Antonio, TX, and **STEPHEN PERRONE**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Bombardier from Somerdale, NJ. His recognition of KENT is because his home state is Oklahoma and from a message KENT left on the 43<sup>rd</sup>'s web site. It turns out that ROSS flew one mission as copilot on KENT's crew. He telephoned



KENT and talked with him and his wife and plans to drive down to see him late in May. KENT had just come home from the hospital.

ROSS says that he lives in Meadowlakes and plays golf about 3 times a week. He hopes to meet MAX soon and maybe play some golf with him.

In February he visited Elton Jennings, in San Antonio, a retired colonel with whom he went through primary, basic and advanced flight training in the Class of 4D.

Add to your Rosters this information for ROSS. 18 Fairway Lane, Marble Falls, TX 78654. Phone - 830-693-3216. E-mail address - <rjackson@tstar.net>.

In his duties with recruitment MAX reports that as of June 5<sup>th</sup> he had received inquiries from the following persons regarding our association. Each was mailed an application form along with the April 2000 Newsletter:

**Bernie Mosher** of Montgomery, IL  
**Richard W. Flicker** of Lake Forest, IL  
**Dahl Russ** of Staples, MN  
**Benjamin I. Sincham** of Foley, AL  
**J. Z. Bass** of W. Hartford, CT  
**Richard P. Schmitt** of Tempe, AZ  
**George L. Wyatt** of Medford, OR  
**Dave Armstrong** of Shasta lake, CA

**John Van Auken** of Columbus, IN  
**Ross Jackson** of Marble Falls, TX  
**James Sontag** of San Antonio, TX  
**Paul Allen** of Travaries, FL  
**Paul C. Smith** of St. Petersburg, FL  
**Ed Obrien** of Collingswood, NJ  
**Anthon E. Cooley** of Universal City, TX

Max also received a letter and a contribution of \$100 from **GEORGIA De RUSHA** an Associate member from Lakeside, CA. Her late husband was a part of the 43<sup>rd</sup>, but she no longer wishes to receive the Newsletter. We wish her well and thank her very much for the gift.

The editor knows that a **Kathy Costello** has contacted MAX since June 5<sup>th</sup>.

MAX also heard from a Marjorie Becker who inquired about our upcoming reunion and some of our history. It appears that she was writing to see if we were the outfit in which **GROVER C. HALLMAN** served. Does anyone know the answer to this question?

Here is a change of address for your Rosters. **LEWIS B. WHITWORTH**, 64<sup>th</sup> Flight Engineer, reports his new address is 721 Lauren Dr., Franklin, NC 28734. LEW says that he completed 38 missions while serving in the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG.

Don't put those pens away, here is another address change to make in the Roster. **KENNETH H. GISSONE** now resides at 7821 Lake Avenue Apt. 422, Cleveland, OH 44102. His wife, **URSALA**, passed away on April 11, 1999. He enjoys reading the Newsletter and hopes that it starts coming to his new address at this Assisted Living complex without interruption. Unfortunately we have no squadron or duty listed in our Roster for KEN.

**BILL WILSON** had a very nice, newsy letter from **BRET WOLFE**, Secretary of the 24 Squadron R.A.A.F. Association in NSW Australia and Associate member of this association. He wanted to thank **BILL** for his generous contribution to the 24 Squadron Assoc. and tell **BILL** about their newsletter that this editor receives as our associations exchange of newsletters. **BERT** says that his fellow Australians just will not send him any detailed information he can put in their newsletter, as do our members to this editor.

Their next newsletter will feature two articles on U.S. B-24s that crashed in Australia during the war but which were not found for around 50 years. One has been referred to as a B-52 by the "tour bloke" who has made it a tourist attraction.

**BERT** says that he did not fly during the war as he was an "Engine Fitter." He can't help wondering what **BILL** was doing in the Royal Canadian Air Force? He hopes to see **BILL** or some of the oth-

ers who were in the war in the earlier days come to visit in Australia – perhaps on one of their special holidays such as Anzac Day.

**TOM FITZGERALD**, Associate from the Philippine Islands, wrote **BILL** that since he moved from Australia to the Philippines in 1998, our association seems to have lost track of him. [That seems strange since he sent us his current address at the time and it was reported in our Newsletter.]

He wants to know about the progress of our history and its author **LARRY HICKEY**, Associate from Boulder, CO. A statement regarding his progress appeared in our last Newsletter that the editor will send to TOM along with others and a Roster. He has also lost LARRY'S address.

TOM says that Samar is the next island south of Luzon and it is well away from and not bothered by the Mayon volcano [Luzon] that is erupting. He has started a small banana plantation on his 1650 square mile block of land. These trees are miniatures with the top leaves being about 8' to 9' high so that they are easy to manage and the bananas are nice eating. He does the odd jobs around his house and paints the river front fence, but other than that "... it's just 'Troppo Lazy'."

TOM's address is **Balagbis Street, BGY2OCPOL, Dolores E. Samar, Philippines 6817.**

[The editor sent TOM the new Roster and back issues of the Newsletter as did BILL.]

In a later letter to Bill, Tom wrote to express his thanks for the 2000 Roster and back issues of the Newsletter, which did not reach him after his move to the Philippines some time ago. He is amazed at how many of the guys are on the Internet. There is no such thing in Dolores. "We have 1 telephone at a Gov't. Office and a private company with 4 telephones for public use. Outside of working hours there just isn't a telephone here."

TOM says that the mention of Tokyo Rose in a past Newsletter brings back memories. Six RAAF B-24 crews arrived at Nadzab on October 4, 1944. This was the beginning of the Heavy Bomber Replacement Training Unit (HBRTU) which had been called the Crew Replacement Training Centre (CRTC). Every day the men listened to the US roster over the PA then they switched to music courtesy of Tokyo Rose. Near the end of October she interrupted her music with the announcement, "We know you Australians are at Nadzab flying American B-24s. We will send you an air raid tonight." TOM says that "TONIGHT" at the movies they were watching Bing Crosby in "Amour Amour Amour" when "... a Jap recon came over with the search lights and medium Ack Ack giving him some. Nobody at the movies moved and the film continued without stoppage. Bing Crosby was more important than any Air Raid." [That is not the title of the film, but the editor is not sure which of Bing's films had the song TOM uses as the title, but believes it might be *Road to Morocco*.]

TOM writes that **BERT WOLFE** [previous item] is doing one great job in keeping the 24 Squadron Association NSW going. He serves as the secretary, president, treasurer, editor and a one-man committee. Tom says that BERT is a one-man band.

The wet season has ended in Dolores and his riverside cement steps now look out over beautiful clear waters instead of the muddy river. His son, Tom Jr., gets him in for a swim quite often.

Like here in the States, he is finding the cost of petrol keeps increasing, as is the cost of cigarettes and beer. His figures indicate that it is costing him nearly 30% more a month for living. That is not like what we are experiencing here in the States.

TOM says that they are having a good copra season this year. El Nino and heavy traffic have caused their roads to deteriorate badly.

**STUART R. BROWN**, 403rd Pilot from Lockport, NY, has sent in his dues through 2001. STU says that he has recently purchased a couple of books that deal with B-24s. They are *ADLIB: FLYING THE B-24 LIBERATOR IN WORLD WAR II* by William Carigan and *B-24 LIBERATOR UNITS OF THE PACIFIC WAR* by Dorr.

He says both are interesting books but do not go into any great detail. "The *AD LIB* book pertains to Europe only. Both have many good photos of B-24s in action and on the ground."

STU says, "... things are all right at this end."

Speaking of books on B-24s, the editor recently purchased the book, *BIG BOMBERS OF WWII*, by William N. Hess, Frederick A. Johnsen and Chester Marshall. It was published by Lowe & B. Hould (that's no joke) in 1998. This book covers the B-17, B-24 (all configurations: British, Army Air Forces, Navy and civilian) and B-29. It does not deal in much detail with the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG, but the B-17s and B-24s of the 5<sup>th</sup> AAF get a good deal of mention until the FEAF is organized. After that, no break down occurs between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Air Forces. Amazingly it does include several photos from the 6<sup>th</sup> Bomber Command and the 397<sup>th</sup> Squadron in which the editor served for 5+ months before joining the 43<sup>rd</sup>. All serial numbers and places where the planes were made are included along with a good deal of other technical material about these bombers and the dozens of modifications made to them at the factories and in the field.

There are many good photos of these planes from all over the world. On pp. 222 -223 there are 3 black and white photos of the nose art of the 64<sup>th</sup>'s B-24 44-50260 *MILLION \$ BABY* taken at Ie Shima. Each is quite different in shading and intensity of the tones of black, whites and grays due to the different type film being used as well as lighting conditions. Using various ways of analyzing these black and white photos, experts were able to create a color photo of the nose art that they feel is close to the true colors of the original painting. It appears on page 222. See next article and photo.

CARL M. CRAMER, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot and CO from Knoxville, TN, sent a terrific photo of his crew and the 64<sup>th</sup>'s B-24M *MILLION \$ BABY*. It is not clear whether the photo was taken before their flight home after the war or after they turned the plane over to the depot in Sacramento, CA, upon their return. What it makes very clear is that the left photo shown in the January Newsletter on page 26 was a 64<sup>th</sup> plane. The photo on the right was a 403<sup>rd</sup> B-24. CARL writes that he flew this plane on many missions as it was one of the newer airplanes in the group and had the latest radar system available at that time. CARL joined the 43<sup>rd</sup> at the same time that the editor did. Carl's crew was assigned to the 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron. At the time 8 crews joined the 43<sup>rd</sup> after serving in the 6<sup>th</sup> Bomber headquarters in



CARL CRAMER / BERNARD GREENBERG / BERNARD BROWN / DONALD  
DUNN / HENRY B. VINCENT / BARTOLOME / ROBERT GARDNER /  
ROBERT CLAIRWOOD / JOHN FROMAN / PAUL MCFERRIN

Panama. The editor seems to recall him serving as CO of the 64<sup>th</sup> from around July Command with 1945 until he returned home a couple of months after the war ended.

He says that in Tennessee they do not have a front license plate for cars and he wants to know if the 43<sup>rd</sup> has a plate for use on cars and if not, how he can go about getting one. [CARL, our good treasurer, BILL WILSON, runs our PX store at the reunions. The editor will contact Bill to see what he has to say about this request.]

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

**EUGENE W. AUSTIN**, Headquarters from Indianapolis, IN, late in 1999. God Bless.

**WALTER M. BUTLER**, 63<sup>rd</sup> from Calistoga, CA, Jan. 10, 2000. Reported by his wife, **LUCY**, who is moving to Idaho to be near to their only son. **LUCY** says that **WALTER** enjoyed the Newsletter and that he had a great wit and wonderful personality. He was 80 years young and his humor is missed in their small town. God Bless. May your stay in Idaho be healthy and joyous, **LUCY**.

**HOOVER COTT**, Public Relations Headquarters from Derby, KS, on Jan. 25, 1999. God Bless. Reported by **HARVEY A. LARSON**, Public Relations Headquarters from Mackinaw, IL. These two men had remained close buddies ever since they worked together over 55 years ago. **HOOVER** edited several small newspapers in the Derby area having majored in journalism at Univ. of Missouri.

**ROBERT CUTLER**, Headquarters Squadron from Quincy, MA, on May 19, 2000. Reported by **HUGH H. HIMES**, Headquarters Squadron from Cheyenne, WY. **HUGH** says that he and **BOB** served together in Headquarters from Maine to Owi when Bob returned to the States. He says that Bob had not been in good health since the Tucson reunion which **BOB** and **HUGH** both attended. God Bless.

**ALBERT G. FISCHER**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Crew Chief from Florissant, MO, in October 1999. God Bless.

**CLAUDIE D. HAWKINS**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Auburn, CA. God Bless. Reported by his daughter **LORI HAWKINS HANSON**. She reported that her late father died in October 1999 of prostate cancer. He always had a passion for WWII information and our group meant a great deal to him. He retired after 36 years of working for the Bureau of Investigation where he rose to Commander of his department. God Bless.

**IRL WILLIAM "BILL" LAIRD**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Line/Crew Chief from Gulfport, MS, Feb. 26, 1999. God Bless.

**DONALD B. TRUDEAU**, 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Engineer from Federal Way, WA, on November 24, 1999. God Bless. Reported by his wife **PAN**. **PAN** says that he never fully recovered from surgery to his knee and was in good health, so the family was shocked when he passed away.

**R. F. "BOB" WATSON**, 65<sup>th</sup> Bombardier and 43<sup>rd</sup> Reunion Coordinator for over a decade, from Lebanon, IL. God Bless.

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#### **DIARY OF COBER'S CREW FROM TIME OF OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENT UNTIL RETURN Part 4**

Jun 17 '44 Ed Hirst, the Squadron navigator, moved in with us after Jim crashed. Fay's crew had split up and some were killed in the crash. I started cleaning up around our tent, leaves,

limbs, and vines had made it look abandoned due to our 7 weeks absence. Some big red ants had made themselves at home while we were gone. I cut brush and raked the leaves and limbs from around the tent and burned all of it. I then drowned the rest of the ants in and around the tent with kerosene which finished off the ants fairly well.

- Jun 18-20 Even though it rained, our tent leaked very little since we had straightened it up and made the tie downs tighter. Our Officer's Club here is a group club, but it seems to encourage a larger group of heavy drinkers. We do see more people but I liked our squadron club better.
- Jun 21-22 Flew lead B-24D #171 to Noemfoer today with a bomb bay gas tank and only 6x1000# bombs. I sure don't like bomb bay tanks! Since Jim was killed I don't have a regular co-pilot but a brand new pilot, Lt. Clark, just out of flying school flew with me today. Since the weather was turning nasty and our long mission, we landed at a newly captured Jap airstrip "Tadje" with 1,500 feet of repaired metal strip and another 1,000 feet of chuck-holed dirt runway. The next morning Capt. Zastrow and I decided we should try to get the Squadron off on the 1500 feet of metal runway to avoid the bomb crater holes in the dirt part of the runway.
- June 23 Four of us went wild boar hunting today. We got near enough to hear them grunt and run but the brush and Kuni grass kept us from actually seeing any of them.
- June 14 Some General was trying to contact me on our squadron phone last night to ask me what shape the runway at Tadje was in, and I told him 1,500 feet of it was good.
- June 26 Led squadron B-24J #994 to Noemfoer 18x250 lb. bomb load 11:50 hour mission. Watched our artillery exchange fire with the Japs as we left target area. Landed at Saidor on the north coast as the weather socked in. Many planes trying to land at once. A-20s and fighter planes running out of gas. Saidor runway is very steep and easy to overshoot going uphill. Circled 15-20 minutes to finally find a space to squeeze into the landing pattern. That was the only time I nearly overshot and had really hot brakes. Flew back over the hill to Nadzab the next day 27<sup>th</sup>.
- July 1 Capt. Steve Johannas and I flew old B-24D #224 with about 30-40 of the 403<sup>rd</sup> air crewmen down to Milne Bay to catch a boat ride home. We made a hard landing and when we turned off the runway the right landing gear collapsed and came up through the flap and No. 3 engine started smoking and since I was riding co-pilot, I really got the switches and gas off in a hurry. The troops evacuated in record time. Oil running down over the manifold made a lot of smoke but it didn't catch fire and the troops came back for their luggage.
- July 2 Test hopped and did a compass swing on B-24 #994. Since Capt. Fay's crew broke up Capt. Ed Hirst, squadron navigator, and my navigator, Lt. Tulig, take turns flying with me.
- July 3 Flew another load of people down to Milne Bay to get a boat ride home "B-24D #471."
- July 4 B-24D #471 Another load of troops to the disembarkation point at Finschhafen also had my instrument check on the way.

- July 7      B-24D #955 Made a cargo trip to Hollandia and back to Nadzab.
- July 10     B-24D #955 Moving squadron building to Owi; flew back to Wakde and then back to Nadzab on the 11<sup>th</sup>.
- July 15     B-24J #315 Another cargo run to Owi and back to Nadzab.
- July 19     B-24D #065 Test hop Nadzab.
- July 23     B-24J #480 Test hop to Nadzab.
- July 24     B-24D #901 Cargo load to Owi and return 25<sup>th</sup>.
- July 26     B-24D #770 Made cargo trip to Dobo and returned.
- July 29     B-24D #955 Another load of people to the boat at Finschhafen and back to Nadzab. The squadron has been at Owi since about the 10<sup>th</sup> and those of us who have finished out missions are here at Nadzab awaiting our orders and flying the non-combat flights. I like Owi; the food is much better - "navy" supplied.
- July 30     B-24D #335 Cargo flight to Owi and returned the 31<sup>st</sup>. Cargo up and bring our mail and etc. back, the 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Aug 1       B-24D #901 Another trip to Owi and back to Hollandia and then to Nadzab on the 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- Aug 4 '44   Received our orders and flew my last flight in New Guinea from Nadzab to Finschhafen in B-24D #955, the co-pilot took the plane back to Nadzab.  
About the 20<sup>th</sup> of August, ten to fifteen of us were called out and took a C-47 to Nadzab and a C-54 to Guadacanal to Canton and Hawaii where we passed through customs - never opened a bag and next day to L.A.

*The End.*

In the April 2000 edition of this Newsletter the November 1942 mission diary of **DAVID A. ADAMS**, 403<sup>rd</sup> and 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Bellevue, NE or Texas in the wintertime, appeared. This diary will be continued here in and in subsequent editions.

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 from Apple Valley, CA, and **CHARLES R. JACKSON**, Ball Turret. This took place during the B-17 era of the 43<sup>rd</sup>. [Although they began their missions with the 19<sup>th</sup> BG, they later joined the 403<sup>rd</sup> Sqd. of the 43<sup>rd</sup>.]

- Dec 1 '42   Long day and a lot of missions. Lt. Smith found a convoy.
- Dec 2       Up at midnight and off at 1:00 AM. Found convoy, but someone was dropping flares and shooting at us. Landed at 9:30 AM. Lt. Freeman and crew were killed at about 2:00 AM in the traffic pattern. While Mitch Cobeaga was filing a clearance for Fall River, he found out that Charlie Crowell was missing. Mitch flew us to Fall River, landed about 6:00 PM.
- Dec 3       Mitch lost one of his best friends. He had known him ever since he was old enough to walk.
- Dec 8       A Very Bad Day! We flew towards Kavieng [New Ireland]. We spotted a large seaplane tender, then one light CR, 2 D.D., and one heavy transport. Sent weather and position reports and shadowed. Stayed until gas was down to ETA plus ½ hour. Arr. Moersby to

- have a B-17 crack up in front of us. Made two passes and got red light both times. Landed at 14 mile. We checked our tanks, we found No. 2 & 3 feeders completely dry along with No. 1. The other three had around 10 gallons each. We were lucky. Took on 50 gallons and then took off for Moresby. During the day, six planes cracked up. 2 (B-17); 2 (P-40), 1 (A-24); and 1 (B-25). A strike force came in all shot up. 10 wounded.
- Dec 10 Jackson came down with malaria. Spent next week trying to get a plane ready to fly back to Fall River.
- Dec 18 Found out Mitch and R.O. Brown have malaria. Found out Holcutt set 550 down in the drink.
- Dec 19 Got a ride back to Fall River with Holcutt. Also Blount, DeSilvia, Engel are sick.
- Dec 20 Patched up crew. Finally got up to Moresby. Elsasser got sick today. Only myself and three crew members left. (That's Racioppo, Fairchild and you [Roy Baker].)
- Dec 22 I flew a 64<sup>th</sup> Crew on a mission. Lost #3 and came back.
- Dec 23 Long mission up the shore to Kerema [P.N.G.], then across to Cape Ward Hunt [P.N.G.]. From there up and took, pictures of Cape Gloucester, up Damper St., over to a point north of Rabaul. We then headed for Kavieng [New Ireland]. Took pictures of six boats. From there we headed for the strip, took pictures. Counted nine "O"s at about 15,000 feet. 10 minutes later they hit us at 26,000 feet. For 45 minutes the fighting was tough. They made 27 passes from the front and six from the tail. One exploded, one spun down trailing black smoke, one in dive and afire, two others damaged. One made a pass with Rt. Landing gear down. Credit went to DeSilvio, Racioppo, Jackson and Baker. Only damage was our antenna shot off.
- Dec 24 Fairchild sick today. Went back to Fall River with Erwin. Checked on 458. No. 3 Engine a mess. But no holes.
- Dec 25 Christmas. Another milk run. Capt. Stone as Nav. Spotted a sub, near Wide Bay [New Britain].
- Dec 26 Back to Fall River. Lost No. 1 Engine.
- Dec 27 Flew to Mareeba. Had to feather No. 1 again.
- Dec 28 Flew to Townsville.
- Dec 29 Expander tube broke while Lt. Slyman (C.P.) was warming the engines.
- Dec 30 Took off for Mareeba, then T.O. for Fall River. Arr. At 6:45 PM, carrying mail, supplies, etc.
- Dec 31 Spent day planning a mission to Rabaul.
- Jan 1 '43 Started day by eating at 12:00 AM. T.O. at 1:50 AM – arrived Rabaul at 4:15 AM. Waited for strike force, but no one showed. Dropped bombs at 5:00 AM. Had real trouble getting out of the searchlights. Back to Fall River at 7:30 AM. "Pick" was my co-pilot today. Another B-24 blew up at Moresby. 4 died, the other 7 may live. Maj. Cool made a water landing off Goodenough Is. Lost 2 men.
- Jan 2 Elsasser went to hospital today. Went to see him on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Jan 5 Up at 2:30 AM. T.O. at 6:20 AM. For mission to hit Lau Kani Strip at Rabaul. Lost No. 4 Engine, so returned to Fall River.
- Jan 6 All the ships that left with me yesterday didn't get back. Smith landed at Moresby. Holcutt made a crash landing on Ponganian. Lt. Jack was found on a reef about sixty miles from Fall River. 458 still missing with General Walker and Maj. Bleasdale on it.
- Jan 7 Lost another B-17. Shot down near a convoy off Lae. Found 2 of the crew.
- Jan 8 24 – 17s; 26 – 25s; P-38s and Beaufighters hit the convoy at Lae.
- Jan 17 Bad day at Milane [Milne?] Bay. 24 Jap Bombers made a daylight raid and really cleaned house. 2-B17s, one 24, 2-P39s, 10 Lockheed Hudsons lost and several others damaged. BX, Transportation, Armament, Tech supply and several gas dumps destroyed. Thank God no personnel were –lost. Spent the next week flying back and forth to Fall River.



- Jan 21 One trip out on 21, Jan. 1943. I had 40 men on board plus lots of dunnage. Fall River was a mess.
- Feb 22 Not much doing until now. Flew a mission to Rabaul with the 63<sup>rd</sup>.
- Mar 2 Our group and others sank 22 ships, 38-"O"s shot down and probably 17 others. Group lost one 17 and crew. 1<sup>st</sup> Pilot killed, and several injuries. B-25s lost one and one cracked up on landing. 3 P-38s lost. Mitch and Durest left to go home. Spent until March 27<sup>th</sup> going to Sydney and back.
- Mar 28 Sent to Moresby with a beer run. Got in after dark. Got heck and also had a few drinks. Up at 2:30 AM. T.O. at 6:00 AM. Long day. Spotted a transport. Also spotted two DD, 3 TP, 2 Cargoes and one Aux. Sent in position and headed home. Lost #4. Landed 1500.
- Apr 2 Found out our squadron was going to get B-24s.
- Apr 12 Flew Co-Pilot for Blount to Moresby. Maj. McCullar and Crew were killed today.
- Apr 13 Blount had his first mission today with the 63<sup>rd</sup>. Brecht was out on a mission. Our crew flew a long mission along the southern coast of New Britain to Rabaul, down the north coast of New Britain. Dropped bombs on several places. Took lots of pictures. Spotted a sub. "Steve" had a bad time. Found out from Lt. Williams, from the Solomons, that only one crew is still alive out of the old 42<sup>nd</sup> from Hawaii.
- Apr 15 Up at 4:00 AM, off at 5:30 AM in 649. Mission to Wewak. 42 planes on ground and 8 in the air. Spotted 6 cargoes, 2 DDs, 1 CR, 1 gunboat, and several unidentified boats. Flew over several places, took pictures and returned at 3:30. Were briefed etc.
- Apr 16 Blount needed a co-pilot, so I flew with him in 521. Routine mission to Lae, Finschhafen, Southern coast of New Britain, over Gasmata, up to Wide Bay, across to Open Bay. Gas running low and bad weather, so headed for Buna up and over the range. Came out at Hood Pt. Landed at 10:00 PM. Long day. Bad headache and ears plugged.
- Apr 17 Lost 2 B-24 crews. Spent several days flying B-24, day and night. I had to check out several pilots. Crews and pilots were learning everything about the B-24. We did have time for softball, Pin-Pong, bridge, etc. My diary shows you [Roy Baker] were pitching for the enlisted men and beat the officers 6-3.

*To be continued*

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

Here are a few useful conversion/units for the techies among our readers:

- Ratio of an igloo's circumference to its diameter = 1 Eskimo Pi.
- 2.4 statute miles of intravenous surgical tubing at Yale University Hospital = 1 I.V. League.
- 2000 pounds of Chinese soup = Won ton.
- 1 millionth mouthwash = 1 microscope.
- 365.25 days of drinking low calorie beer because it is less filling = 1 lite year.
- Half of a large intestine = 1 semicolon.
- 1,000,000 aches = 1 megahurtz.
- Weight an evangelist carries with God = 1 billigram.
- Shortest distance between two jokes = A straight line.
- Time between slipping on a peel and smacking the pavement = 1 bananosecond.

From several sent in by ED GAMMILL.

How not to Teach the young:

The old blacksmith was instructing the eager young novice in the art of treating a horseshoe. "Now do exactly as I tell you. I'll bring the shoe from the fire and lay it on the anvil. When I nod my head, you hit it with the hammer."



## REALITY CHECK...

**ELECTRIC LIGHT:** "Good enough for our transatlantic friends but unworthy of the attention of practical or scientific men." *British Parliament, 1878.*

**THE TELEPHONE:** "An amazing invention, but who would ever want to use one of them." *Pres. Rutherford Hayes, 1876.*

**THE TELEVISION:** "People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night." *Darryl F. Zanuck, head of Twentieth Century-Fox, circa 1946.*

**COMPUTERS:** "There is no reason for any individual to have a computer in their home." *Ken Olson, President of Digital Equipment Corporation, 1977,*

An elderly lady did her shopping and upon returning to her cart, found four youths in the act of leaving with her car. She dropped her shopping bags and drew her handgun, proceeding to scream at them at the top of her voice, "I have a gun and I know how to use it! Get out of the car you scumbags!"

The four men didn't wait for a second invitation but got out and ran like mad, whereupon the lady, somewhat shaken, proceeded to load her shopping bags into the back of the car and get into the driver's seat.

She was so shaken that she could not get her key into the ignition. She tried and tried and then it dawned on her why. A few minutes later she found her own car parked four or five spaces father down.

She loaded her bags into her car and drove to the police station. The sergeant to whom she told the story nearly tore himself in two with laughter and pointed to the other end of the counter, where four pale white males were reporting a car jacking by a mad elderly woman described as white, less then 5' tall, glasses, and curly white hair carrying a large handgun.

No charges were filed.

An Illinois man left the snow-filled streets of Chicago for a vacation in Florida. His wife was on a business trip and was planning to meet him there the next day. When he reached his hotel in Florida, he decided to send his wife a quick e-mail. Unable to find the scrap of paper on which he had written her e-mail address, he did his best to type it in from memory. Unfortunately, he missed one letter and his note was directed instead to an elderly preacher's wife whose husband had passed away only the day before.

When the grieving woman checked her e-mail, she took one look at the monitor, let out a piercing scream and fell to the floor in a dead faint. At the sound, her family rushed into the room and saw this note on the screen:

**DEAREST WIFE: JUST GOT CHECKED IN. EVERYTHING PREPARED FOR YOUR ARRIVAL TOMORROW.**

**P.S. SURE IS HOT DOWN HERE.**

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Late news. **MARGARET and ERNIE WELLS**, 403 pilot, are thinking about returning to Australia and New Guinea for a look at the area where he fought in WWII. They feel that it would be great to have a group go on such a trip and perhaps the group could meet with its counterparts in Australia. If this is something you would be interested in pursuing, please contact:

**COL. ERNEST J. WELLS (RET.)**

e-mail <PEGGY1917@email.msn.com>.

**215 Nutmeg Court**

**Harrison, VA 22801-9085**

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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 that you want in the Newsletter, please have it in the editor's hands absolutely no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month before publication. Late arriving material will be included in the following Newsletter. PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY. DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO SEND MATERIAL IF AT ALL POSSIBLE TO SEND IT EARLIER.

Dues (\$15 Per Year or \$100 Life) may be sent directly to BILL WILSON, Treasurer, or to JIM CHERKAUER, Secretary. (Addresses are at the beginning of the Newsletter.) Make the check out to **43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Assoc.** Check the mailing label on this edition to find out your status with respect to paid up dues. The Association's fiscal year is the same as the calendar year.

You may send E-Mail to the Secretary/Editor at <[cherrj@buffnet.net](mailto:cherrj@buffnet.net)>. Please send no attachments that you did not create. Attachments are the hiding places for viruses. The editor has received one virus that came on an attachment forwarded unknowingly by an association member. He will no longer open attachments that were not created originally by a known sender.

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.