



**43RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**"KEN'S MEN"**  
**NEWSLETTER 76th EDITION**  
**OCTOBER 2000**



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

We have just concluded another 43<sup>rd</sup> reunion. Our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of our association and, just by chance, our banquet was held on 2 Sept. VJ Day, for which we all fought. It was a pleasure to see all of our comrades again, and we are most thankful that our ranks are such that we continue to see a good turnout. This reunion was significant since we had more guests, relatives of members, etc., than had joined us previously. We were most pleased that William "Willie" Pettus, son of our beloved commander, Col. Jim, could be with us. He gave us an update on Jim's condition, and left us with hope and uplifted spirits. Thank you "Willie" for you and your wife to take the time to be with us. We are also most thankful for those of you that brought your friends, relatives, relatives of our group, etc., to be a part of our reunion. You're always most welcome and we hope you join us again.

Our secretary, Jim Cherkauer, will fill in on this newsletter as to the board minutes, etc., and so I will not dwell on that. Of most importance to all of us: WHAT IS THE STATUS OF OUR BOOK – history of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group? Here's a bit of happenings since last we met. Roland Fisher visited with Larry Hickey, our publisher, in May. He saw the extent of Hickey's work and expressed the concern of our group in regard to repeated promises, and thus, delays in publication. Since I had never known the printer, Ron Neilsen, I made a trip to Austin, just 85 miles up the road to meet with him and discuss the book issue. I spent three hours with Ron in mid June just prior to his visit to Colorado, on a business trip, with plans to visit with Hickey. Upon his return from that trip, Ron called me and informed me that Hickey was making good progress and that he, Neilsen, expected the manuscript at Austin by 1 Sept. I called Ron, prior to our group meeting on 2 Sept. and he informed me that he had not received the manuscript as yet ... but, in his words stated, "I'm blowing no smoke" and expect it by mid Sept. I have great confidence in Ron Neilsen. I truly believe that upon receipt of the manuscript, our book will be in production seven weeks later. If not, I'll be the GOAT!! Seriously, I'm confident we will have out book as a much delayed Christmas present.

Thanks to all of you who assisted our reunion: Irene Watson, Jim Cherkauer, Dick Bennett, Sam Commons, Bud Lawson, Fran Osborn, Fred Hagen, Cliff Neve and my BW, Margaret. And a splendid thanks to Nancy Solomon and Mildred McClenny for providing the music for our memorial program. (A few days after the reunion, I received a check for \$50.00 in the mail from Cliff Neve for the general-purpose funds for the group. Thanks again to Cliff.) [Cliff's letter appears on pages 33-34.]

Max enclosed the poem appearing on the next page.

## THE REUNION

Autumn leaves rustling, together  
to the appointed place the old warriors come.  
Pilgrims, drifting across the land they fought to preserve.  
Where they meet is not so important anymore... They meet  
and that's enough for now.  
Greetings echo across a lobby.  
Hands reach out and arms draw buddies close. Embraces,  
that as young men they were too uncomfortable to give,  
too shy to accept so lovingly.  
But deep, within these Indian Summer days they have reached  
a greater understanding of life and love.  
The shells holding their souls are weaker now,  
but hearts and minds grow vigorous remembering.  
On a table someone spreads old photographs; a test of recollection.  
And friendly laughter echoes at shocks of hair gone gray or white, or merely gone.  
The rugged slender bodies lost forever.  
Yet they no longer need to prove their strength.  
Some are now sustained by one of "medicine's miracles,"  
and even in this fact they manage to find humor.  
The women, all those who waited, all those who love them,  
have watched the changes take place. Now, they observe and listen,  
and smile at each other; as glad to be together as the men.  
Talk turns to war and planes and foreign lands. Stories are told and told again,  
reweaving the threadbare fabric of the past.  
Mending one more time the banner of their youth.  
They hear the vibrations, feel the shudder of metal as propellers whine and whirl,  
and planes come to life.  
These birds with fractured wings can see beyond the mist of clouds,  
and they are in the air again, chasing the wind,  
feeling the exhilaration of flight, close to the heavens;  
the wild and blue yonder of their anthem.  
Dead comrades, hearing their names spoken, wanting to share in this time, if only in spirit,  
move silently among them. Their presence is felt and smiles appear beneath the misty eyes.  
Each, in his own way, may wonder who will be absent another year.  
The room grows quiet for a time.  
Suddenly an ember flames to life. Another memory burns.  
The talk may turn to other wars and other men, and of futility. So this is how it goes.  
The past is so much the present.  
In their ceremonies, the allegiances, the speeches, and the prayers, one cannot help but  
hear the deep eternal love of country they will forever share.  
Finally it is time to leave. Much too soon to set aside this little piece of yesterday, but  
the past cannot be held too long for it is fragile.  
They say, "Farewell... see you next year, God willing," breathing silent prayers for one another.  
Each keeping a little of the other with him forever.

*Rachel Firth*

*From the DAEDALUS FLYER, Spring 1997*

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

You probably noticed that the association's web site URL was shown at the beginning of this issue of the Newsletter. To make things clear, the web site is the sole responsibility of **TRACY TUCCIARONE** our very capable and hard working web mistress. Although the editor and TRACY do touch bases with each other, material for the web site should go directly to her by e-mail at <bomber-girl@kensmen.com> or to her home address 736 North Bosart Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46210.

**ELDON "BUD" LAWSON**, 65<sup>th</sup> Bombardier, is the **official historian** for the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG Assoc. Send to BUD any historical materials regarding the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG that you no longer want, so that he can make copies to be preserved in a number of military aviation museums. His address is 23942 Wolf Rd. Bay Village, OH 44140-2857.

In May **JACK NUNNELLEE**, 64<sup>th</sup> Nose Gunner from Salem, OR, sent the editor a newspaper clipping from the local newspaper, *STATESMAN JOURNAL*, telling of the upcoming visit of the Collings Foundation's two aircraft the B-17 *Nine 'O Nine* and the B-24 J *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. They were to be the Salem Air Center one weekend in early June and would be arriving from Grants Pass, OR. The B-24 J has been painted and numbered as a replica of a 64<sup>th</sup> plane during the latter part of WWII.

JACK celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary with a large gathering of his friends on July 30<sup>th</sup>. His children hosted all for a barbecue at the Miller Brothers Ranch in Salem.

Also celebrating the big 80 was **REGINALD E. TATRO**, 65<sup>th</sup> Radio Operator from Greenfield, MA. His family had a big celebration for him earlier this summer. REG and **LUCILLE** will not be making the reunion this year we are sorry to hear.

An article by retired Lt. Col. L. **DAYTON BLANCHARD**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Clondcroft, NM, and Cibolo, TX, appeared in the *Mountain Month*, 148<sup>th</sup> Edition, June 2000 under the feature "OPINIONS (that do not necessarily reflect the views of this paper)." This article is about those same two Collings Foundation aircraft. The article shows a couple of photos. One has DAYTON standing on the port side of the B-24 reaching up to the Plexiglas window in the nose of the airplane. The other is a side view of #440973 with the dragon extending the length of the right side of the plane. His article appears below.

On Tuesday afternoon, April the 26<sup>th</sup>, I was playing a round of golf at The Lodge Golf Club. While on the tee box of the 8<sup>th</sup> hole, I heard the sound of aircraft engines in the distant east. Within a few seconds, a large four-engine aircraft with two distinct vertical rudders appeared above the Ponderosa pines. The sound of the four Pratt and Whitney engines was a familiar one, but a distinctive sound that I had not heard for 55 years when I last flew a B-24-J from Clark Air Base in the Philippines to Edwards Air Force Base, California. Most pilots from the World War II era and post war years could identify aircraft by the engine sound. The B-24, B-17, B-25, P-51, P-38 all had their own distinct engine sounds. What I saw and heard above the Lodge Golf Course was a B-24 heading for the Alamogordo airport. This airplane was scheduled for a two day appearance in Alamogordo.

After 55 years, I was anxious to see, touch, and observe the interior and exterior, and I accomplished this on Thursday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. After entering the airfield complex, I made contact with the crew of B-24-J number 440973. The meeting was most cordial, and I was given a personal tour of the old airplane, including a review of cockpit procedures prior to starting engines, and prior to take-off. Back in 1945 I had memorized the checklist and all procedures. Like riding a bicycle, one never forgets. The complex instrument panel, 4 throttles, fuel mixture controls, and supercharger handles plus the numerous accessories in the cockpit became a vivid recollection. I had initially flown the B-24 at Tarrant Army Airfield at Ft. Worth, Texas, where I completed First Pilot training. After assembling a crew, I trained at March AFB, California,

with practice bombing, navigation, and instrument flying. Following completion of this phase, I flew from San Francisco to the island of Biak, across the west Pacific Ocean. Flying time was over 55 hours in the air. Months later, I completed 25 missions from New Guinea to the Japanese mainland via the Philippines and Formosa and was discharged in 1946. After attending Wisconsin State University and Marquette University, I was recalled to active duty with the next 30 years being spent in various assignments throughout the globe and retiring in 1973. Thus it was a nostalgic reunion for me with the old airplane that carried me and my crew through the war in the Pacific from New Guinea to Okinawa. Throughout that period, the four engines never faltered and the airframe remained sturdy and intact in spite of absorbing anti-aircraft flak, flying through monumental thunderstorms, and penetrating two major typhoons. We always made it back to home base. Of course, others were not as fortunate.

The aircraft on display was first flown in Ft. Worth, Texas where it was manufactured by Consolidated Aircraft Corporation (eventually General Dynamics) in August of 1944. The B-24 was capable of speeds up to 300 mph, had a range of 3,000 miles, and could attain altitudes up to 30,000 feet with the help of superchargers and an internal oxygen system for the crews with oxygen masks. However the plane was much more effective between the altitudes of 10,000 feet and 20,000 feet. Other B-24s were produced at San Diego and Detroit's Willow Run plants. During World War II, the B-24 flew more missions and dropped more bombs than any other aircraft. Competition between the B-17 and B-24 was always fierce. The B-17 proved more effective in the European Theater, but the B-24 was better in the Pacific because of a longer range and the capability of carrying a heavier bomb load of 8,000 pounds. The B-24 that was on display in Alamogordo was completely restored at a cost of \$1,300,000. The original cost of the airplane was in the neighborhood of \$250,000 in 1939. The Collings Foundation did the restoration. This airplane is the last combat ready B-24 on this planet. It has about 1,250,000 parts. It took 97,000 man-hours of effort in restoration. One-third of the external skin was replaced and 400,000 rivets were necessary. Five thousand feet of hydraulic lines were replaced. Control cables were also replaced and all of the electrical wiring required replacing. It was a monumental and vital accomplishment by the Collings Foundation.

During World War II, many of the airplanes of all types were decorated with "nose art." My organization (the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group, 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron) was no exception. Many of the group's B-24's were decorated. The individual airplanes took on a personal identification and the crewmembers had strong personal feelings about the aircraft. It created personal pride and affection for this giant which many times grossed 65,000 pounds on takeoff. The nose art on B-24-J 440973 depicts "The Dragon and Its Tail," extending from the nose to the aircraft tail. It is most spectacular to see, as it is an exact reproduction of the original airplane assigned to the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group, 64<sup>th</sup> Squadron. The original airplane was dismantled and destroyed at the end of the war. Hundreds of all types of aircraft suffered the same fate. Many were in nearly new condition. The aircraft that I flew home from the Pacific ended up with about 150 hours on the airframe and engines. The "boneyard" at Tucson and Kingman, Arizona was where the destruction took place.

It was unfortunate that some of the planes were not retained for museum purposes. Today, the aircraft inventories of the Air Corps, Navy and Marines of WW II are an endangered species. There are museums throughout the country that have restored and displayed many of the propeller-driven aircraft. Another B-24 is now in the process of restoration at the American Air Museum in England at Duxton [Duxford?]. [Editor's note. That B-24 had been on static display at Lackland, San Antonio, TX.]

My feelings towards the B-24 is as an old friend and I appreciated the opportunity of going through the bomb bays and being in the cockpit once again after 55 years. My thanks to the Collings Foundation for displaying the B-24 throughout the country for our younger generations to see and touch. I hope that some of you took the opportunity to see it.



**TOM FITZGERALD**, Associate member from Dolores E. Samar, Philippines, wrote that while he was secretary of the 24 Squadron (RAAF) Association NSW Australia, which he founded, he and one of our previous secretaries, **LLOYD "BREEZY" BOREN** 65<sup>th</sup> Bombardier from San Antonio, would just exchange newsletters. Now that TOM lives in the Philippines he has figured that he should become a life member of our association. Figuring out the exchange rate in currency was not too easy a task, but TOM is now a life member of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group (H) Assoc., Inc. He thanks **WILLIAM H. "BILL" WILSON, Jr.**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot, Treasurer and former President of the Association from Snyder, TX, for all of the back issues of the Newsletter sent to him.

TOM writes that he did not know the 43<sup>rd</sup> had operated out of Tacloban, Leyte, Philippines. When he read an item by **LEWIS H. DAWS**, 65<sup>th</sup> Aircraft Maintenance from Rialto, CA, about this in the October '99 Newsletter, he decided to write LEW for a copy of the page of the *Free Philippines* Nov. 23, 1944. TOM says that he visits Tacloban every month to buy his meat supply. He writes that the strip the 43<sup>rd</sup> used was built by the No. 3 Airfield Construction Squadron, RAAF. There is no strip there now and TOM says that he will find where it was located and what is there now.

The mayor of Tacloban puts on an Annual Free Dinner with grog from the War Veterans. Tom is sure that the mayor would appreciate a copy of the sheet from LEW's WWII Leyte-Samar newspaper.

"We have a Group who meet at the Royal Restaurant Tacloban every Monday ... US, AUS, NZ, GERMAN, SWISS. The US, AUS & NZ boys are veterans from WWII to Vietnam. On one visit I met a US Vet, Korea, and the boys said he was ex 5<sup>th</sup> AAF. I said, 'The forgotten 5<sup>th</sup>.' He said, 'I was HQ 5<sup>th</sup> at Korea and I don't read or care about history.' Up went the hairs on the back of my neck. I said, 'I was attached to the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group of the 5<sup>th</sup> at Nadzab in WWII and the 5<sup>th</sup> have a very proud history.' He was deep in thought after that."

"After leaving HBRTU Nadzab on 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec. '44, I went to the 24 Squadron B-24 Liberators at Fenton, down from Darwin. You guys were one of the first to use Fenton. A great place – bush, bush and more bush."

Joining our association for the first time is **PAUL C. SMITH**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Aerial Gunner, who served in the 43<sup>rd</sup> from May '45 through Oct. '45. His wife's name is **DOLORES**. PAUL resides at **3434 Bayshore Blvd. NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33703**. His phone number is **727-526-9985**. Perhaps one or two of you reading this will remember PAUL and welcome him aboard.

Another new member is **GEORGE L. WYATT** a retired Marine Corps GYSGT. GEORGE made contact with us through **JANICE OLSON**, Associate member from Apple Valley, CA. Apparently he became interested in the B-17 which led him to her. His address is **4856 Pioneer Rd., Medford, OR 97501**. His phone number is **541-857-0211**.

Good news from **ARLENE ROTH** tells us that **ROBERT P. "BOB" ROTH** is making slow but steady progress in recovering from his second stroke. He is now off the Hospice program and resides in a nursing home. To be nearer BOB, ARLENE has moved into a Retirement apt. next door to BOB's nursing home. She is hopeful that BOB will be able to join her there "... somewhere down the line." She wishes all a great reunion in San Antonio. Her new address is **10 Terracina Blvd., Apt. 328, Redlands, CA 92373-4808**. The phone number has not changed.

An inquiry came via e-mail from Ruth Douthitt daughter-in-law to **CLINTON A. DOUTHITT**, Flight Engineer from Pompano Beach, FL. Ruth wondered about the status of CLINTON since his wife **MAXINE** passed away on April 26, 2000 and she took care of paying all of the bills, etc. CLINTON has been receiving our Newsletter regularly. [Check the mailing label to see status of your dues.]

**SANDRA EDSALL** reported the passing of her husband **MICHAEL T. EDSALL**, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot, instantly from a heart attack. "He did not suffer at all." See TAPS – LAST ROLL CALL. She writes that

she learned a good deal from Mike about the war. She looks forward to receiving the Newsletter to read about the bomb group just as Mike did. Her e-mail address is <Sedsall@aol.com>

**WILLIAM McMURRAY**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Aircraft Maintenance from Berlin, CT, has written in praise of the late **ALFRED [ALBERT?] FISCHER** who died in October 1999 as reported in the April 2000 issue of our Newsletter.

**WILLIAM** writes that he was **AL**'s Assistant Crew Chief in Dobo, Nadzab and Owi. He says, "Mr. Fischer was one of the finest people I have ever met. He was a humble person that never looked for praise. No one knew that he flew combat missions from Moresby early in the war when flying was tough. He was asked by a CO, whose name I think was **SCOTT**, to fill in for a crewmember in the hospital. I'm sure the crewmember had fear instead of an illness. Mr. Fischer flew these missions and then came back as a Crew Chief. He retired from government service as a Chief Master Sergeant. A great and wonderful person."

**GEORGE O. ANDERSON**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Blairstown, NJ, says that he will take the rap for the mix-up about the target of the mission reported in the January edition of this Newsletter and questioned by others in the April and July issues.

Last year while returning to NJ from a trip to Montana, he was able to make contact with his WWII Flight Engineer, **ORLAND POELS**, in Green Bay, WI. "It was there that I became aware of the mission in question. We only had a short visit and I apparently jumped to the conclusion that the mission was to Balikpapan. In any case, let me get the facts straight regarding this heroic deed performed by **ORLAND POELS** and the articles published in the July News letter and before. The best way to do this would be to publish the citation contained in the **DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS** awarded to **ORLAND POELS** as follows:

19 December 1945

FOR EXTRAORDINARY ACHIEVEMENT WHILE PARTICIPATING IN AN AERIAL FLIGHT TO LICANAN AIRDROME, MINDINAO, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, ON 1 SEPTEMBER, 1944. SERGEANT POELS WAS AN ENGINEER ON A B-24 AIRCRAFT WHICH TOOK PART IN ONE OF THE FIRST HEAVY DAYLIGHT BOMBING RAIDS ON THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS. IN AN ENGAGEMENT WITH 8 ENEMY FIGHTERS, THE PILOT OF THIS B-24, CRITICALLY WOUNDED BY A 20 MILLIMETER SHELL, LEANED ON THE CONTROLS, MAKING THE BOMBER DIFFICULT TO HANDLE. WHEN THE ENEMY FIGHTERS WITHDREW, SERGEANT POELS LEFT HIS TURRET AND REMOVED THE PILOT FROM THE COCKPIT. WHILE THIS WAS BEING DONE, THE AUTOMATIC PILOT WAS ACCIDENTALLY TURNED ON AND THE PLANE, OUT OF CONTROL, MOVED INTO THE PATH OF ANOTHER LIBERATOR. SERGEANT POELS DISCOVERED THE DIFFICULTY, TURNED OFF THE AUTOMATIC PILOT, AND AIDED THE CO-PILOT IN BRINGING THE BOMBER UNDER CONTROL IN TIME TO AVOID A COLLISION. HE THEN ACTED AS CO-PILOT AND HELPED BRING THE AIRPLANE SAFELY BACK TO BASE. THE OUTSTANDING COURAGE AND DEVOTION TO DUTY DISPLAYED BY SERGEANT POELS DURING THIS FLIGHT ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE HIGHEST TRADITIONS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY AIR FORCES.

**ORLAND** was Flight Engineer on **GEORGE**'s crew, but on this mission he flew with the crew of **NORRIS WEAVER**, the pilot who was shot, and **JERRY REGIS**, copilot.

**GEORGE**, a life member of our association, sent along a generous contribution as well as his compliments to "... all of those who have been so dedicated to the mission of the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG over the years and for giving so much of themselves on behalf of the membership. I regret that I haven't been able to be

among that deserving group for personal reasons.” He found the July Newsletter “outstanding” and hopes to see all of us in San Antonio.

A last minute letter from ORLAND is worth quoting, as it will clear up some of the confusion about his role in the mission.

I don’t know who put me in for the citation, but I was the engineer on the flight that officer WEAVER was killed.

When I dropped out of the turret, the co-pilot was fighting the controls. WEAVER was not leaning on the control. I noticed that the autopilot was on at that time. I turned it off. After that he said the controls were too free. Soon after he settled down and we did what we could for WEAVER. After that I flew back as co-pilot in WEAVER’s seat. I did not fly or land the plane.

We’ll never know who turned the autopilot on.

**EDWARD A. DALY**, 65<sup>th</sup> Bombardier from Ormond Beach, FL, wants to add to the story from **ANDREW “ANDY” BUROCHONOCK**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Stamford, CT, which appeared on p.19 of the April 2000 Newsletter. ED served on ANDY’s crew while in the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG.

ED served in the 605<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron from Dec. ’43 to Jan. ’44 at March Field, Riverside, CA, in an overseas training unit, OTU. Then he transferred to Fairfield Susan Air Force Base, 604<sup>th</sup> Squadron in Novato, CA, which is just north of San Francisco, where they picked up a brand new B-24 that cost about \$18,000 at that time. They tested it and themselves for several weeks before putting two 200-gallon tanks in the bomb bays to enable them to fly the 1,400 miles to Hawaii and the South Pacific. They departed on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1944, which was Income Tax day in those years. They island hopped for 10 days arriving in Nadzab, New Guinea. It was there that they joined the 5<sup>th</sup> AAF 43<sup>rd</sup> BG and 65<sup>th</sup> Squadron to prepare for war.

Ed also enclosed his dues and a contribution to the association.

A brief report from **RAYMOND EMANUELSON Jr.**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Virginia Beach, CA, to the effect that he is “Sorry to report, but due to circumstances and other commitments, we will be unable to attend this year’s reunion. Hope all goes well with things in San Antonio – cheers.”

Remitting a check for his 2001 dues, **FLOYD REDDING**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from N. Ft. Meyers, FL, writes that he was surprised to see his name on p.15 of the July 2000 Newsletter. So he referred to his diary to help refresh his memory about those night missions to Davao, Mindanao. He found that they flew their first night mission to Davao Harbor on 7-8 of Aug. ’44. “We searched the whole gulf and couldn’t find any ships to bomb, so we ended up dropping our bombs on the airstrip which was our secondary target. No flak or Night Fighters and so ended an easy mission.”

He found their second mission to Davao on 12-13 Aug. ’44 to be much more interesting. A reporter, John Graham Dowling, went along on the mission and he submitted an article to the *Chicago Sun* which in turn was copied by *The Delphi Citizen*, FLOYD’s hometown paper and printed on Thursday, Aug. 31, 1944. He enclosed a copy of this article.

Reporter Dowling called their airplane a B-17. As a result FLOYD wrote the editor of his local paper a somewhat amusing letter which he also sent to this editor. Also included is a photo of the crew that shows Lt. **JAMES V. BROWN** as Navigator. On the mission that Dowling wrote about, the Navigator was Lt. **COMEAU** as **JAMES BROWN** was down with typhus.

FLOYD and his wife, **JEAN**, attended the last reunion in San Antonio in ’94. His emphysema, that has kept him from attending recent reunions, has gotten worse and he is “...pretty much restricted to home under care of Hope Hospice. He says in answer to the editor’s question made some time back that his work at Wright Field involved working on “Skunk Works” planes, the U-2, the YF-12 Interceptor, the SR-71 and the R-2 which is an enlarged U-2 that is still in operation.

The article taken from *The Delphi Citizen* follows:

### **Lieut. Floyd Redding Pilots B-17 over Philippine Islands**

AMERICANS ARE FLYING OVER JAP-HELD PHILIPPINES AMOST NIGHTLY

(The following story was written by John Graham Dowling of the Chicago Sun Foreign Service, and tells of the flight Dowling made on the "Sky Shy," B-17 Flying Fortress, whose co-pilot, Lieut. Floyd Redding of Delphi helped take the big ship on a bombing mission over the Philippines.)

Advance U.S. Air Base, Dutch New Guinea – (Delayed.) It has taken us a long time to get back this far, but now we are back flying over the Philippine Island of Mindanao with a heavy load of bombs, flying up into Davao Gulf with a necklace of lights below us along the shore and a pair of Japanese night fighters worrying up the sky behind us.

It has been a long flight, and now below us is the Jap ship we are after, making a find fast "V" wake down the water along the shore, hugging it, and we are coming closer with the navigator counting off the minutes and then the seconds, and then the frantic back line of the ship coming into view, and off to the right in the night is the black mass of Mount Apo in this land that once was American and now is Filipino and never has been really Japanese.

And then the first bomb is away, and I tell you it makes you feel good.

#### **"Sky Shy" Is Veteran**

We had taken off earlier in the evening from a large American base in New Guinea – where the Japs now are counting the days.

Our bomber is misnamed "Sky Shy."

Sky Shy, which has 13 enemy ships to her credit, has a full complement on board tonight, with 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. James Bradford of Louisville, Ky., as Pilot and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Floyd Redding of Delphi, Ind., as co-pilot.

We take off and as the motors groan and the ship pulls strongly forward on the runway, Bombardier 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Robert M. Donahue of Glendale, Calif., peers through a small port and says, "Ten bucks says the second light past the tower and we'll be off."

But we already are rolling and straining, tightening ourselves, as though we ourselves would will the ship into the air, and Donahue calls off the first light as it flashes by on to the tower – we are hurtling with speed now, and then one light, two lights and we are off. And Donahue grins at having won his bet, and then we are on our way.

#### **Put in "Sack Time"**

The long flight up across the equator, through the mountains of white clouds, soon settles to routine, with navigator 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Ulysses Comeau of New Bedford Mass., plotting the course. [Copy is illegible for part of the preceding line, but the editor believes he has filled in the missing words fairly accurately.]

Up on the flight deck, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Edward Griffiths, of Peckville, Pa., a pilot who is "sandbagging" this trip, kibitzes over the shoulder of the pilot and co-pilot while Sgt. Frank Campbell, engineer of Youngstown, Ohio, checks the performance of his bomber.

The rest of us – Sgt. Frederick C. Gibson, aerial observer of Cresson, Pa.; Staff Sgt. John Cleto, nose gunner, of Oakley, Calif.; Staff Sgt. Charles "Terry" Donohoe, tail gunner, of Los Angeles, Calif. – all lie down in the waist with earphones on our heads to put in some "sack time" until we get to the target.

The radio operator, Sgt. Michael McNamara of New York City entertains us by picking up various programs.

The pilot put on "George," the automatic pilot, and everyone takes it easy.

#### **Pilots Go to Sleep**

... Some hours later high above the black Pacific Lt. Comeau Calls, "Navigator to pilot – over!"

There is no answer.

This time Comeau calls the engineer: "Hey, Campbell, take a look – see what's cookin' in the cockpit."

A few minutes later the ship gives a lurch and Campbell laughs over the interphone:

"How do you like it? The pilots were both asleep. I touched Redding and he like to jump 50 feet."

This calls forth much heckling of the fliers from all quarters of the ship.

### **Comedy Overboard**

Then suddenly the comedy is gone, and the men seriously prepare the ship for action. Waist ports are opened and the guns nosed out; the bombardier fuses the bombs, the locators and the phone system are checked.

The Philippines lie ahead.

There is a strange and melancholy feeling about viewing this disputed land for the first time, particularly from the port of an inbound bomber, seeing the black mass of its mountains, and there is surprise in finding the island's lights are still on.

Bradford brings the ship in and noses into the bay where the lights of three villages form the neat patterns of the streets in the darkness below.

It is a fascinating sight, these lights of the enemy. They mean much. We are the marauders; we are the prowlers, and down below us they either do not know it or do not care.

We search the bay for ships and finding none, turn out past a point heading through the blackness into Davao Gulf. On the shore to our left we pass numerous fires and there are fires, too, back in the hills and beyond – glares in the distance. The double eyes of the headlights of a convoy of trucks wind down the coast, blinking through the trees as we skim past searching for shipping.

Gibson, the aerial observer, reports: "one and possibly two night fighters in the vicinity."

"Roger," answers Pilot Bradford "out there in the tail."

"Roger," answers tail gunner "Terry" Donohoe.

### **See Jap Ship**

And then we find what we are looking for – a Jap ship running our aerial blockade down the coast.

The exuberant bombardier Donahue calls, "We'll get you the ship, baby. Let's go."

Bradford banks the bomber around and comes down on the Jap low and from the stern and the hydraulic system screeches as the bomb bay doors clap open, and Navigator Comeau times the count.

And then the bomb is away, and we lean out of the waist window to see the night light up directly underneath us with a sick yellow blue in which the water convulsion of the bomb burst extends and rises in a circle of fire and water off the Jap ship's port bow and the forward impetus of the vessel carries it into and through the burst and we are over it and gone.

### **We Cruise**

Then for more than an hour we cruise Davao Gulf with the city of Davao now blacked out on the shore to our right. The pair of Jap night fighters still are pestering about, and we search south down the coast. We get no fire from the ground at all, nor was there any ack-ack from any of the ships we attacked.

In the vicinity where we bombed the first Jap ship we drop a flare and make a search, but the ship is gone, either sunk or beached – and so we head south and out, our harassing mission done.

### **They Know We Are Coming**

And in the darkness we watch the black land of the Philippines diminish behind us, and we feel good. We have let them know we were there. We have let them know we are back.

We let them know it almost every night now – our Filipino friends and our Japanese enemies.

**Lt. Floyd Redding Writes; Is In Netherland East Indies  
SAYS "SKY SHY" IS "PUT OUT" AT BEING CALLED A B-17; WANTS CORRECTION**

**Editor's Note:** Several weeks ago The Citizen carried an article on the exploits of the famed "Sky Shy," one of the first American long-range bombers to blast the Philippine Islands. Lt. Floyd Redding of Delphi was co-pilot of the Sky Shy and made the trip to the islands. However, we erred in calling the bomber a B-17; she is a B-24.

Lt. Redding has written us on behalf of his bomber, which he says, has been on a rampage ever since she was wrongly labeled and he believes that she will calm down again once an apology is forthcoming. We are glad of the opportunity of begging the Sky Shy's pardon.

We also think you will enjoy Lt. Redding's letter in which he tells something of a flyer's life in the Netherland East Indies. It follows below:

Dear Editor – I can readily imagine that the trials and tribulations heaped upon the head of the editor are enough to drive any two people nuts, but the fellows here in the squadron have kidded me so much about being a B-17 pilot. I feel forced in self-defense, to correct you . . . Let me say I have never been in a Flying Fortress let alone fly one.

While the B-17 is a good ship for a certain kind of job, it is no longer used as a combat type plane in this theatre of combat. This is strictly a long-range war over here, and the B-17 just can't carry enough gas and carry any bombs too. That 500 mile trip from London to Berlin is a very short haul to us over here who generally have to fly from 800 to 1100 miles to hit our targets. We fly nothing but B-24s over here. The Liberator B-24 is the only heavy bomber outside of the new B-29s in China, which have long enough range to be effective.

**"Sky Shy" is "Put Out"**

Old "Sky Shy" has become quite incensed over being called a B-17 and we have had a lot of trouble talking her into flying since she found out. She's been spitting and snarling at everything and everybody since she heard, so wish you would correct the mistake so she can get her mind back on her work.

**Carve Out the Jungle**

When we first moved into our base here a couple months ago we had to hack out a place in the jungle to build our shack. After two months though, we have the jungle pushed back and are pretty comfortable. Our shack stands about 100 feet from one of the most beautiful south sea island beaches you ever saw in the movies. It is nice white sand but the sand doesn't reach very far before the coral begins. Hence the name of shack, "Coral Cabin."

The boys over here name their shacks as well as their planes. Behind us is "Knot Inn"; on the left of us is the "Passion Pit" and on the right the "Gold Bar Club." The officers build their own shacks over here, and each one has an individual name.

The shacks are really nothing but tents but most of them have floors. Ours is of 2 inch planks and very solid. Then we have a large table we built ourselves. Only furniture not home made are canvas folding beach chairs we got when we left. We have electric lights and our own well which we dug ourselves.

**Build Electric Pump**

We took an old fuel pump and aluminum tubing from wrecks and made an electric pump for pumping our water. We pump it into a 50 gal. drum about 7 feet high. We have a faucet on the drum so we can take showers.

One of the boys found an old gun camera out of a P-47 and fixed it up. He hooks it up to a battery on a jeep and goes around taking movies of everything and everybody. The boys are pretty ingenious in the various things they make out of scraps. A couple of the fellows made a small auto out of a belly tank and a small motor. They also make boats.



### **Squadron Has Laundry**

Our squadron has a laundry which is completely home made. The boys cut a 50 gal. drum in two; then they made wooden paddles and fastened them to a rod. They used a connecting rod and really had two machines run by one motor. And so it goes! And you should see some of the jewelry the boys make – rings, necklaces – even earrings.

### **Home About Easter – Maybe**

We have to fly 500 combat hours now to be eligible for leave back in the States. I still have about 150 to go so guess it will be around Easter before I get back to “good old Delphi.”

Although the Citizen is a month old when I get it, it's still like a letter from home.

I hope you will not be disturbed about my correcting your error, but I just had to do something to get old Sky Shy in a fighting good humour again. Best regards to all, Floyd.



43BOMB GROUP, 63 SQDN  
NADZAB, NEW GUINNA

APRIL 1944

- |                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. James Bradford - Pilot             | 6. Frank Hancharuk - Asst. Flt. Engr. |
| 2. Floyd Redding - Co-Pilot           | 7. Michael McNamara - Radio Oper.     |
| 3. James V. Brown - Navigator         | 8. John Cleto - Tail Gunner           |
| 4. Robert Donahue - Bombadier         | 9. Charles Donohoe - Waist Gunner     |
| 5. Francis Campbell - Flight Engineer | 10. Frederick Gibson - Radar Oper.    |



**ELMER E. HANSEN**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Thorndale, TX, writes to "add his two bits" to the article about the last combat mission against Japan that appeared in the July 2000 Newsletter. He says that there were numerous bombers in the air at the time that had to abort and return without completing their missions on the morning of the Japanese surrender – whole flights of them. The night before his crew completed their mission, primarily a weather recon, with a full bomb load while over the Korean waters. They found the sea lanes empty and ended up bombing some fish in the Korean waters. He says the war really started in Korea when Japan occupied it. "It didn't start with Pearl Harbor as people are lead to believe. Mission accomplished."

E-mail from **ROBERT A. CLAYCOMBE**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Meridian, IN, says that he too read with interest the account about the last mission flown against Japan in WWII. He says that his crew flew a mission on August 25, 1945. They flew over Kure Naval Base, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki and dropped 3 500-lb. bombs in the ocean. [After the cessation of hostilities, the 43<sup>rd</sup> flew B-24s over these cities and other targets regularly for a time. The editor recalls that the orders were not to drop any bombs unless the Japanese fired at them or attacked them by plane. Th editor understands that all of these missions ended as did ROBERT's.]

A story that will be of interest to those of us who saw the war end while we were on Ie Shima comes from **KENNETH BROWN**, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from El Paso, TX. He sent the editor the following article from his local paper, *El Paso Times*, dated 7/23/2000.

**U.S., Japan honor reporter killed in WWII on island**

By Michael Zielenziger, Knight Ridder News Service

**IE SHIMA**, Japan – On a tiny spit of tropical Japan where he was killed 55 years ago, Ernie Pyle, America's most famous war correspondent, was honored Saturday as the voice of the GI Joes who fought World War II.

Almost 100 years to the day after his birth, Japanese farmers, American Legion veterans and young U.S. Marines in jungle uniforms saluted Pyle as the quintessential little guy who brought his haunting ground-level views of the bloody foxhole and the gruesome battlefield into the home of millions of American readers. Pyle, a columnist for the Scripps Howard newspapers, was killed here by a bullet from a Japanese sniper's rifle on April 18, 1945, three days after the U.S. assault on the 10-square mile island.

American Legion soldiers crisply saluted a fallen comrade. Politicians gave speeches to mark the somber occasion. Children waved American and Japanese flags, and pointed with wonder as marines carrying M-16 rifles paraded past.

All this for a war correspondent who died doing his job.

The extraordinary fact that U.S. and Japanese forces were bitter antagonists so many years ago hardly needed to be mentioned. After all, U.S. soldiers still control nearly half his island, and marines still conduct parachute training exercises on its hillsides.

"We all know about Ernie Pyle," said Kameo Tamashiro, who remembers being a 6-year old prisoner of war after American troops captured the atoll.

"I understand that Pyle did not report cold statistics, but he described people's feelings and emotions. In that way, he told readers how the war felt, so we respect him for that."

**DREW C. WESCHE** from Groton, CT, left a message on the 43<sup>rd</sup> web site that the editor read and sent him e-mail about our association to give to his father, **FRED F. WESCHE**, who obviously served in the 43<sup>rd</sup> in the B-17 era. He probably was a pilot from remarks made, but the editor is not certain of that. The editor explained about our association and our reunion and mentioned that we have an associate member, the daughter of a B-17 pilot from the 64<sup>th</sup>, **CHICK OLSON**, who was killed in action and that she had recovered several airplanes and remains in New Guinea. The editor did not specify any names in his e-mail message to DREW.

A follow up e-mail from DREW indicated that his dad planned to attend the San Antonio reunion and that they had been in touch with **JANICE OLSON**, Associate member from Apple Valley, CA, the unnamed lady mentioned above. It turned out that **FRED** had already sent his scrapbook and flight log-books to **JANICE**. It seems that when Brig. Gen. **KENNETH WALKER** was shot down, he was flying off the starboard wing of **FRED**'s plane. **FRED** followed the general's plane down until it disappeared in clouds.

DREW says that he serves in the Connecticut National Guard and one of their duties has been to provide honor guards at military funerals. He writes that lately they have been doing quite a few for WWII vets. He also says that while exploring on our web site he found the son of another of our members. The son lives in the town next to his.

After a number of these military funerals, DREW writes, "It dawns on me that knowledge of history and the experiences that these veterans have endured to a great extent dies with them. Organizations such your association help serve to bring these great veterans back together as well as creating a mechanism for seeking out and preserving the history of which they were part. As sons and daughters of these veterans we are all proud of their service. I am excited for my father, as I know he is anxious to be reunited with those with whom he served. Thanks to your organization who have put this all together! It is truly one of the noblest of endeavors."

Later a letter arrived from **FRED** who explained that **JANICE** had contacted him to get information about his experiences flying a B-17 in the 64<sup>th</sup> Sqd. while stationed in Australia and New Guinea. **FRED** will be at the reunion. His wife, **MAUREEN**, had been ill but has recovered enough that they can attend the reunion. **FRED** will get at the task of becoming a member of the association. They met in Australia while he was on leave in Sydney. He returned to the States in 1943 at which time they were engaged. They married in 1946 and will celebrate their 54<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Oct. 19, 2000. They have two children and 4 grandchildren.

During the war he served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> BG, 49<sup>th</sup> Sqd., Langley Field, VA, from May 1942 to May 1943; in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Provisional Group, Hq. Sqd., Hickam Field, Hawaii, from May to June 1942; in the 19<sup>th</sup> BG, 30<sup>th</sup> Sqd., Mareeba, Queensland, AUS. from July 1942 to Oct. 1942; in the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG 64<sup>th</sup> Sqd. (Nov. '42-May '43) at Mareeba and on to Port Moresby (7-mi.) about Christmas '42; and in the 88<sup>th</sup> BG, 399<sup>th</sup> Sq. (as Sqd. Commander) from Nov. 1942 to May 1943, Walla Walla, WA, and Avon Park, FL. From June '44 to Oct. '44 he served in the 88<sup>th</sup> BG HQ, and finally in Hq. 325<sup>th</sup> AAF Combat Crew Training Sta. to Sept. '45.

**FRED** flew 8 missions with the 19<sup>th</sup> BG, 30 with the 64<sup>th</sup> and 3 missions at Midway Island during the battle of Midway. He stayed in the Air Force and retired in 1962 as a Lt. Colonel. He then became a pilot for Eastern Air Lines. Now that he is retired from that occupation, he has his own Big Band, "Fred Wesche's Band" which plays popular music in the style of Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey and others.

His address is 1593 Lamberts Mill Rd., Westfield, NJ 07090. His phone is 908-233-5611.

**FRED** sent along an account of his Notable Missions:

Shortly after Pearl Harbor, the 2<sup>nd</sup> BG for a while operated out of Langley Field as an anti-submarine force. "On the night of May 1, 1942, my crew and I were on a night patrol using the new-fangled gadget called ASV (Anti-surface-vessel) radar when we came upon a German submarine, which we attacked using flares. If not the first, we were one of the first to make an attack on an enemy submarine (off Cape Henry). Results were indeterminate."

Jan. 5, 1943, over Rabaul Harbor. A daylight mission led by Gen. Kenneth Walker in the lead element. We saw him go down trailing smoke - tried to follow him down to provide protection from a number of Jap fighters on his tail, but he disappeared into a cloud bank. Although Tokyo Radio the next day claimed they had captured the General, he never showed up on any POW list, and I believe he went down at sea south of Rabaul.

March 30, 1943, off Finschhafen, New Guinea. After the Battle of the Bismarck Sea, a disaster for the Japanese, they abandoned any attempt to run slow transports across the Vitiaz Strait to their forces

on the north coast of New Guinea, and instead resorted to making fast dashes across during the night with high-speed destroyers. Alone one night on armed recco we came upon a group of 4 destroyers apparently unloading men or materiel (at first we thought there was only one). We made 2 runs, and on the second dropped our load, hitting one on the stern, but were caught in their searchlights and received heavy anti-aircraft fire in return. Suffered extensive damage which put out electrical and hydraulic systems, and wounded top turret gunner Guy Clary. A couple of bombs hung up in the racks, and the bombardier had to go back and release them with a screwdriver. My crew all received the Silver Star for this one. We were credited with a probable sinking of the destroyer since the next morning reconnaissance reported seeing considerable debris at that location. Lowell Thomas, newscaster and war correspondent, wrote me up on this adventure in his book *These Men Shall Never Die*.

April 3, 1943, over Kavieng Harbor, New Ireland. Teamed up with Art Curran on a run over a Jap cruiser in the harbor – he at skip bombing altitude, we at about 5000 ft. Both of us hit it, and some minutes after the attack we had the satisfaction of seeing a large explosion and fireball erupt from the cruiser.

Robert F. Dorr, 3411 Valewood Drive, Oakton, VA 22124 has sent the editor e-mail to the effect that a book he wrote and was published this year is about to go out of print soon. He has purchased a number of copies to make sure some are still available. It is entitled, *B-24 Liberator Units of the Pacific War*. He makes no profit from this publication as he donates all funds and material to the San Diego Aerospace Museum.

The book contains about 60,000 words of text covering all numbered air forces and bomb groups in the Pacific. It has 30 color plates by artist Mark Rolfe, six figure art plates by artist Mike Chappell and about 120 photos – many never published before. The soft book cover is by artist Iain Wyllie.

He is selling the books he purchased for \$22.10 including all postage and handling. Please send a check for that amount to him at the above address.

His phone is 703-264-8950. His fax is 703-264-1295 and his email is <RobertDorr@aol.com>.

**ARNOLD M. HUSKINS**, 65<sup>th</sup> Bombardier from Pittsfield, MA, phoned in the sad news of the passing of his pilot, **GLEN E. BALES** from Springfield, TN, on July 22, 2000. GLEN had been in failing health for the past couple of years. ARNOLD says that he feels rather strange since he is now the only surviving officer on their crew.

He also says that the stepdaughter of his son will be finishing her basic training for the Air Force at Lackland AFB at the time of our reunion. She will be in the parade we are supposed to see, so ARNOLD hopes that he can get a chance to talk with her and his son and family who will be attending the ceremony.

**VIRGINIA HOOVER**, widow of the late **WILLIAM "RADAR" HOOVER**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Navigator, reported the sad news of the passing of BILL. He also reported a recent change of address as they had recently moved to Texas to be near their daughter. The new address is **4002 Lakepoint Forest Dr., Seabrook, TX 77586**. Phone – **281-241-7576**.

A copy of the NEWSLETTER of THE 90<sup>th</sup> BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, No. 96 June 2000 contains the planned events for their national Reunion from Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> through Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> at the Imperial Palace, 3535 Las Vegas Blvd., South Las Vegas, NV 89109. Hosts are Jim and Kay McAteer. Phone 760-744-7997.

The 19<sup>th</sup> BOMBARDMENT ASSOCIATION reported in its April-June issue of its newsletter that they had approved the casting of a 24" x 12" bronze plaque for the B-29 monument at Great Bend, Kansas. The 19<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group insignia will be in the center. Mounted below the insignia will be the three operational squadron numbers during WWII and the Korean War. The 19<sup>th</sup> BG was stationed at Clark

Field when the war began. They had the first B-17s in the Pacific. After they were sent back to the States, the 43<sup>rd</sup> more or less replaced them, they returned near the end of the war in the 20<sup>th</sup> AAF flying B-29s that they also flew out of Tinian during the Korean War. Their 3 squadrons were the 28<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> and 93<sup>rd</sup>.

They also reported having a great reunion in May in San Diego.

In their July-Sept. newsletter they reported that they were sending \$500 to the B-29 "Raz-in Hell" Memorial at Castle AFB. Their effort to raise more money for this memorial has been halted and this is the final amount they will raise.

**PAUL L. NICHOLS**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Picayune, MS, and author of the book *MY LUCKY DICE*, informs the editor that he enjoys reading about the combat experiences of some of our men as they have been appearing in recent Newsletters. He says that the editor should feel free to use any of the combat stories in his book at any time. The editor thanks you **PAUL** and will take advantage of this offer.

Early in August the editor received a letter from **FRANK DRAB**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Aerial Gunner from Venice, FL. **FRANK** ran across an old copy of *Air Force Magazine* and saw a notice for a reunion of the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG. He was quite taken back as he had heard nothing from or about the 43<sup>rd</sup> since his departure from Ie Shima for the States in November 1945. He wrote to **JAMES THOMPSON, Jr.**, our host for the wonderful Tucson reunion last year, but he did not follow up at that time about what he had learned from **JIM**.

**FRANK** had been teaching Aerial Gunnery at Tyndall Field, FL, when he volunteered for overseas duty. He was sent to Nadzab, N.G. to teach aerial gunnery, but he wanted combat duty. He was sent to Leyte, but found that his orders were incomplete and he was not assigned to any outfit. At this point in his story he starts to talk about "we." If the story sounds familiar, a similar story appeared recently in our Newsletter from another one who the editor believes is one of the "we."

They made their way to Clark Field by plane and truck and went to 5<sup>th</sup> Headquarters where they asked to be assigned to the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG 403<sup>rd</sup> Squadron. Instructors at Nadzab who had served in the 43<sup>rd</sup> had told them about the 43<sup>rd</sup> and 403<sup>rd</sup>. Their request was honored. **FRANK** was immediately assigned as a waist gunner to a crew that was short one man. He flew out of Clark Field and Ie Shima and says he saw the rubble and fires at Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945.

**IRVING POLIN**, 65<sup>th</sup> Radio Operator from Boca Raton, FL, wrote that he read the incident by **WILBURN "JOE" ALLBRIGHT**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Andrews, TX, in the last Newsletter in which he tells how he conned the Field Artillery out of some concrete. **IRVING** sagely notes that the "... officers learned from their enlisted men who negotiated with the Navy for their flooring."

**IRVING** sends along a couple of years of dues to make sure that his status is current.

He also says that if interested he can relate a short story about their crew's first mission that was supposed to be a milk run. By all means send it along **IRVING**. That is how this Newsletter gets put together by the editor – from stories from our members.

Please note that his phone number has been changed to **561-483-3633**.

Expressing his regrets that he will not make it to the S.A. reunion, **AARON BURLESON**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Altus, OK, sent **BILL** his dues for 2000-2002. He says that he is still working for "Air Force Issues" and they have a change of command taking place on August 31<sup>st</sup>.

He sends his best to all and writes that he enjoys the Newsletter.

**STEVE W. BLOUNT III**, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from San Antonio, TX, writes that his address label with the last issue of the Newsletter indicates that he has missed his dues this year. To rectify the problem of remembering, that comes with age, to pay dues each year, he mailed **BILL** his Life Membership dues.

Here are a new address and phone number for **CLARENC H. CREAMER**, 64<sup>th</sup> Flight Engineer.

**Capital Place, 700 Black Lake Blvd. Apt. 222, Olympia, WA 98502. Phone – 360-357-8130.**

Another sending BILL his dues for Life Membership is **CLINTON A. DOUTHITT** from Pompano Beach, FL. He has a changed area code so the new phone number is **954-943-7925**.

**VLEMA EDWARDS Jr.** from Bethesda, MD, widow of **W. H. EDWARDS Jr.**, Pilot, has requested that we remove her name from our mailing list. We are truly sorry to receive that information, but we wish her the best.

Paying their dues through 2001 are **WILLIAM “BOB” GAFFNEY**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Madison, IN, and **LARRY MAIN**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Tulelake, CA.

**RENE F. HERRE** from Sacramento, CA, and widow of 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot **WILLIAM HERRE** also sent BILL her dues for 2000-2001.

Bringing his dues up to date is **GERALD F. O’BERMEYER**, 403<sup>rd</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Recon. Sqd. Flight Chief, from El Paso, TX.

**RICHARD “DICK” W. MORIARTY**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Flight Engineer, has not moved but he is requesting a slight change in his address to make it easier for the postman to deliver his mail. He says that Petersham, MA, is a small town and the postmaster knows where to put his mail, but he would be happier if the address were correct. Here is the change: **P.O. Box 192, Petersham, MA 01366-0192**.

A new member as well as a lifetime member is **EDWARD J. O’BRIEN, Jr.** a Flight Engineer from Collingswood, NJ. EDWARD sent in his dues, etc., on a form that is not from the 43<sup>rd</sup>. He lists his service as being in the USA and the Pacific, but only lists a Sqd. N from Langley Field, Virginia. He flew on anti-submarine patrols from there. He flew in B-18s and B-24s and did serve as an airplane mechanic at some stage of his tour. His address is **184 Lawnside Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108-1936**. His phone is **856-854-9032**.

**ELWYN H. HANSEN**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Flight Chief from North Platte, NE, writes that he will try again to get in good standing with the association. His name was omitted from the 2000 Roster even though his dues were up to date. He was mailed a package of past newsletters, which he appreciates receiving, but he is not receiving the regular mailings of the Newsletter. We thought that we had corrected the error when you paid your 2000 dues, but then we discovered the error in the Roster. The other HANSEN is **ELMER E. HANSEN**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Thorndale, TX.

ELWYN is also wondering about his “book” which he has not as yet received. ELWYN, no one has received that history yet and just when you will get it is anyone’s guess. We hope that you are keeping **LARRY HICKEY**, Associate and author from Boulder, CO, up to date with your address so that if and when the book is published, he can mail it to you. Yes, many of our members who paid for this book several years ago are not longer with us.

He says that he and **PHYLLIS** are both doing quite well and manage to live in their own home and take care of things even though both were 80 years young this past spring. Over the years he has had a great deal of surgery: heart; 2 bypasses; heart valve replacement; prostate cancer with 40 radiation treatments; breast mastectomies (benign); as well as other ailments.

They have 2 daughters and 5 grandchildren all of whom are in college or are in medical training of one sort or another. Their oldest grandson will complete his training as a doctor next May and is the only grandchild married.

Another bringing his dues up to date and through 2001 is **DAVID ADAMS**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Bellevue, NE.

He writes that he had a nice note from **TOM FITZGERALD**, 24 Squadron Associate Member from Dolores E. Samar, Philippines. DAVE says that TOM wanted to know where Fall River was located, so DAVE wrote and told him that it was at Milne Bay, New Guinea.

He asks the staff to continue its good work for the Association.

**SHIRLEY M. VORSE** of Girard, PA, and widow of the late **BOYD E.**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Engineer, has become a Lifetime member of the Association. She says that she does enjoy the Newsletters and appreciates all of the work that is done by those who keep the Association going. She hopes that the reunion was a great success and that we get more new members. She asks all to keep up the fine work and blesses "... all for keeping this legacy to remember."

SHIRLEY writes that she keeps in touch with **JULIAN P. & MARY STEWART** of Petersburg, VA. JULIAN and BOYD were on the crew of **HARRY PARKER** while in New Guinea. JULIAN has been recuperating at home after surgery. SHIRLEY has not heard from the widow of **TOM MULL** since last December.

She hopes that one day her son, Boyd E. Vorse, Jr., who served in Vietnam in the early 70s, will join our Association and help keep our history alive.

Sending BILL his dues through 2002 is **MALCOLM R. OBOURN**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Navigator from Vienna, ILL. He is looking forward to '01 and Nashville which is only 120 miles from his home. He tells BILL to keep up that good work.

**EILEEN GOODWIN**, Associate member from Kewanee, IL, and widow of **ROBERT GOODWIN** 64<sup>th</sup> Bombsight Maintenance, has mailed us a check for the year 2001 dues. EILEEN reports that she has not been up to par for most of the summer and has lost a good deal of weight. The doctors are puzzled as she is taking her medication faithfully. She says that she does not seem to have the energy she would like. She does enjoy the Newsletter. We wish you well, EILEEN.

**LEE A BROWN**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Nose Gunner from Puyallup, WA, has sent Bill his dues for 2001 and has signed up a former crew mate to join our Association.

Here is that new name to enter in your 2000 Rosters. **PHIL DESSACK**, 403<sup>rd</sup>, 766-4A Village 8<sup>th</sup>, Lexington Club Blvd., De Ray Beach, FL 33446. His phone is 561-638-4995.

**CHARLES "CHUCK" WOODS**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Flight Chief, has paid his dues through 2001 and writes that his wife, **ELIZABETH**, is still paralyzed from a stroke she had in '96. So he is busy most of the time, but he would sure like to make a reunion although that will be difficult. CHUCK has a new address so don't put those 2000 Rosters away. The address is 12 Bentley Lane, Lititz, PA 17543-8400.

Mailing BILL has dues and inserting a bit of humor in his letter is **ANTHONY J. De ANGELIS**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Crew Chief from Sarasota, FL. TONY sends his best to all.

TONY and his wife, **VIRGINIA**, were sitting on their lanai on October day. VIRGINIA was enjoying a martini while TONY was having a "bit of dew from Scotland." Their tape was on and the song was *San Antonio Rose*. Tony jumped up and "... faced south where San Antonio" should be some 1500 miles away. [Don't you live in Florida, Tony?] VIRGINIA thought TONY had gone crazy until he explained that he was once stationed at Biggs Field in El Paso, TX, where the troops had to stand at attention whenever the "... National anthem of Texas" was played. Listening to Bob Wells and his music reminded TONY that he was not current with his dues for the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG Assoc. Anyway, he concluded that El Paso was much better than New Guinea even when "... our old buddies the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry

were in El Paso" where they were MPs and did not like the Air Force. He also notes that the Japs did not like us either.

**ABRAHAM " ABE SHORTY" HELLMAN**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Navigator from Miami Beach, FL, has sent in his 2001 dues plus a donation to the Association. He wonders why his address label is not correct since he paid his 2000 dues also with an additional donation. He wants the record to be correct for 2001.

ABE thanks everyone for the work being done on the Newsletter. He thinks that it has been getting better with each issue.

ABE says that his memorabilia is stored in his daughter's house in New Jersey. So he says that the story he will relate may not have the precise dates, but it should still be interesting.

When the crew on which he served arrived in New Guinea, they were told that since the B-24s there had no firepower under the planes, the Japanese pilots would fly directly underneath them and attack from below. One day the crew as assigned a B-24 with a 50-caliber machine gun mounted in the floor of the plane through some Plexiglas about midship in the plane. As the plane neared the target area, the pilot, **JACK K. MINIERE** from Apopka, FL, told ABE that he was to man that gun. ABE says that when he got back to where the gun was located and looked down through the Plexiglas, there was a Zero flying about 100' underneath the plane on the port side. When ABE tried to push the machinegun to the right so as to fire at the plane, he found a pile of ammo boxes made that impossible. He fired anyway "... and when that Zero pilot saw those tracer bullets come flying by, he took off to the left so fast I never saw him again."

After that the B-24s they flew had belly turrets which in turn eliminated that Japanese habit.

ABE writes that including him there are 5 members of that crew still alive. [The editor notes that all 5 belong to our Association.]

**JACK K. MINIERE**, Pilot from Apopka, FL; **WILLIAM E. BURNS**, Bombardier from Saginaw, TX; **REHART ZAHURANEC**, Radio Operator from Sharpsville, PA; and **NATHANIEL PHILPOTT**, Armorer/Gunner from Woolwine, VA.

**RALPH D. GRUBB**, 64<sup>th</sup> Tail Gunner from Pulaski, VA, has sent the editor some newspaper articles from the *Roanoke Times*, "New River Valley Edition," about his visit to the Collings Foundation's restored B-24-J, now called *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*, when it paid a visit to Virginia Tech Airport. He and his fellow crewmate, **WENDELL W. JONES** 64<sup>th</sup> Top Gunner from Norfolk, VA, came to see that plane and reminisce about their tours in the 43<sup>rd</sup>.

The articles have photos of the tail turret, the inside of the B-24 looking towards the tail and a photo of RALPH standing by the nose of the plane with *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL* lettering and nose art showing. One article refers to the plane art as "Lurid painting decorated this Dragon." The original plane was scrapped after the war. It was supposedly the last B-24 chopped up for scrap, as there were hopes that someone would purchase the plane with its decorative art that covered the entire right side of the craft. RALPH flew one and WENDELL two missions in the original #973.

Both men agreed that the Collings Foundation had reproduced the artwork to look like the original. GRUBB recalled when there was a lull in the fighting, it gave a 'guy in the motor pool' the chance to make the painting. He said the risqué subject matter just showed that the young men stationed at the air base in the South Pacific were thinking about 'getting home to the women'." [The artist was S/Sgt. **SARKIS E. BARTIGALL**.]

RALPH pointed out that all 10 men on their crew made it home, so they were among the lucky ones. None of the planes they flew on their missions ever took a direct hit although his tail turret took a piece of anti-aircraft shrapnel on one mission. Those turrets were so small that the tail gunner could not get into one while wearing a parachute. When asked about the danger of flying the tail gun position, RALPH replied, "I didn't look at it that way. It was just part of my job." It was a "Darn good mission if you got back."



The two men looked at some old photos of B-24s and the original Dragon. They had good memories that gave way to bad ones. "Stories about people who were lucky turned into stories about those who were unlucky."

RALPH wrote that, "Several university people were taking pictures and asking [us] questions. We enjoyed our visit to the VA. Tech Airport."

TOM DOW, Associate member from Asheboro, NC, in an e-mail to the editor says that after the San Antonio reunion, he spotted FRED WESCHE, 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot, in the Greystone's American Historical Store. FRED told TOM that he was the B-17 pilot mentioned in an article in a previous Newsletter who bombed the American Navy submarine by mistake. Fortunately for the navy, the bombs did not hit the target.

The editor does not know if FRED joined our Association while at the reunion, but here is his address. 1593 Lamberts Mill Rd., Westfield, NJ 07090. The editor has no other information about FRED other than his wife's name is MAUREEN.

Although an announcement had been made last year, apparently some readers overlooked it. A letter reached the editor in a rather circuitous route that took 2 days short of a year to arrive.

JOHN TALLITSCH, 13<sup>th</sup> Recon and 403<sup>rd</sup> Bombardier from Rock Island, IL, passed away in August of 1999. Sometime during his tour in the 403<sup>rd</sup> JOHN had served as squadron bombardier. His son, Robert B. Tallitsch, reports that his dad did not talk about any of his experiences in the war or about his crew or other squadron members other than to have high praise for his crew and squadron.

Robert asks that any of you, who knew his dad, please drop him a note and tell him about some of those experiences his dad had during the war. He sends his thanks in advance for anything any of you can share with him. Robert has provided both his postal and his e-mail addresses: 3402 10<sup>th</sup> Ave., Moline, IL 61265 and <bitallitsch@augustana.edu>.

In the January 1996 Newsletter 57<sup>th</sup> edition, an item appeared asking for information on the B-17 era of the 43<sup>rd</sup> at the request of Gene Eric Salecker. He received a number of letters and photos from B-17 personnel in the Association. His book is completed and went to press early this fall. It should have been available sometime in October 2000, but due the chief editor having a heart attack as well as a shortage of paper, publication was delayed until Christmas of 2000. The book entitled *Fortress Against the Sun: The B-17 Flying Fortress in the Pacific* is published by Combined Publishers of Pennsylvania. It has 384 pages, 50 photographs and is fully indexed.

Gene writes that, "The 43<sup>rd</sup> BG has a significant role in the book, beginning with their disjointed move to Australia, their early flight with the 19<sup>th</sup> BG, their pioneer work with 'skip bombing,' and their eventual dominance as 'Ken's Men'." He says that this is the first book dedicated solely to the use of the B-17 in the Pacific. The book also covers the transition period when the B-17 was phased out in favor of the B-24.

The book is listed for \$34.95 (plus shipping), but Amazon.com is listing it for \$29.95 (plus shipping). If you are interested in purchasing an autographed/ inscribed copy from the author you may do so for \$30.00 including shipping. His address is 2526 N. Davisson St., River Grove, IL 60171-1710. His e-mail address is <g-salecker@neiu.edu>.

For anyone interested in reading more about this book, you may do so by going to Combined Publishing's website at: [www.combinedpublishing.com/Combined/cp-fort17.html](http://www.combinedpublishing.com/Combined/cp-fort17.html).

E-mail from our Vice President, ROGER G. KETTLESON 64<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Las Vegas, NV, reports that he and AUDREY took a holiday in Hawaii. While there they paid a visit to our B-24 era commanding officer, JAMES T. PETTUS, and his lovely wife, BETTY, at the Pettus' Honolulu home. ROGER AND AUDREY later joined their own son in Hilo for Thanksgiving. ROGER and AUDREY report JIM and BETTY are the same gracious people despite their physical difficulties in walking – but

they handle the situation well with walkers and assistance on occasion. They are facing their current handicaps with therapy and good old 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group determination. Dr. **MILTON GUSACK**, 65<sup>th</sup> Flight Surgeon from Chevy Chase, MD, called to check on their condition during the time the Kettle-sons were visiting. JIM reported that the good Doctor calls him daily to make certain he is behaving himself – and BETTY keeps JIM honest.

Roger writes that, "Our fearless leader and his 'Bride' are most deserving of our thoughts and prayers in their current struggle to return to normal mobility – get those feet and legs working. A note to them from the 'troops' who care to do so will help brighten their days and give them added encouragement for a speedy recovery."

JIM and BETTY PETTUS live at **292 Wailupe Circle, Honolulu, Hawaii 96821-1523**. JIM's e-mail address is <**jas.pettus@worldnet.att.net**>.

**WILLIAM GALIDA**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Armament from Campbell, OH, brought his dues up to date and through 2001. He says that he should have paid for lifetime membership, "...but then if everyone had done that, look at the money the association would have lost. It would be broke in a hundred years."

**BILL** says that he recently talked with **RICHARD B. BELL**, 403<sup>rd</sup> Truck Mechanic from Omaha, NE. **DICK** reports that he and his wife, **FLORENCE**, are doing well.

**BILL** thanks everyone who helps put out the Newsletter for the fine job and he understands that "It's a lotta work." He says God Bless you all.

In the same mail a letter arrived from **RICHARD B. BELL** with his dues for 2001. **RICHARD** reports that **FLORENCE** is still under the care of Hospice and that keeps him "... confined to quarters. So I am the chief cook and bottle washer."

He hopes to make a reunion one of these days.

Also remitting dues for 2001 is **JAMES A. OTTINGER**, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Allentown, PA. JIM says that he visited **E. PAGE PRESTON**, 65<sup>th</sup> Navigator, during a weekend in Virginia Beach. **E. PAGE** served as navigator on the crew of 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot **DONALD YEAMAN**.

**PATRICIA B. WILBER**, widow of the late **DONALD W. WILBER**, has sent us a new address so get those pens and 2000 Rosters out. She writes, "I love our Newsletter. Don loved the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force and the 43<sup>rd</sup>! News of his fellow comrades makes me feel close to him. We looked forward to the reunions we could attend. Col. PETTUS is in my prayers."

Here is the new address: **151 Governors Harbour, Hilton Head Island, SC 29926**.

After reading the reunion special Newsletter in 1999, **DOMINICK V. ANGERAME**, 63<sup>rd</sup> A/Electrician from Albany, NY, wrote to **GINNY HUSTAD** from Edina, MN and widow of the late **CARL HUSTAD**, 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot, regarding **CARL**. **GINNY** has forwarded that letter to the editor via **BILL WILSON**. **DOMINICK** writes, "I read about your husband Carl passing on; in the latest 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Newsletter. I am not a personal friend, but greatly admired and respected him. I served under Captain Hustad at Bangor, ME; the Queen Mary; and New Guinea as an enlisted man. I'm sure you know how well he was thought of by all. He was a great leader who responded to our Country's great time of need. My condolences and my wife and I wish you well."

**GINNY** expressed her happiness in receiving the October 2000 Newsletter with all of the reunion news in it. She wants to thank all, like **DOMINICK**, who sent her memorials and letters after the death of Carl. "It meant a lot to our family to hear how respected he was as an 'officer and a gentleman'."

**GINNY** has established a Life Membership Memorial to **CARL**.

**HUGH H. HIMES**, Headquarters from Cheyenne, WY, could not make the 2000 reunion as it conflicted with his family reunion. This past November he celebrated his 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday and says that "...

my get up and go is getting slower and slower.” He is happy that he could attend as many reunions as he has been to and is looking forward to Nashville. He enclosed his 2001 dues.

HUGH writes that he enjoys the Newsletter and wants to wish all of the officers of the association the Happiest of Holidays and a great 2001. He says God Bless all of the members of the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG Association. He is proud to be a part of the 43<sup>rd</sup> and the US Air Force from which he retired as a Master Sergeant. He enjoys every day that he is here.

**Don't forget to mark your calendars for our 21<sup>st</sup> annual reunion in Nashville, Tennessee, from October 28 through November 4, 2001.** A package of materials regarding the next reunion will be included with the April 2001 edition of this Newsletter. **BETHEL** and **BONZELLA RAY** are serving as our host and hostess for this event. Let's fill the Inn at Opryland with 43<sup>rd</sup> people. At the last report the editor had, the cost of the hotel will be \$69.00 per night plus 13.25% tax. See you there.

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

**MELVIN V. "DUTCH" EHLERS** 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from San Antonio, TX, on Nov. 27, 2000. Reported by **MAX M. AXELSEN**. God Bless.

**MYRON "MIKE" OCEAN** 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot of Pompano Beach, FL, on Oct. 2, 2000. Reported by **LOTUS H. "JACK" FULTZ** from the 63<sup>rd</sup>. God Bless.

**WILLIAM A. "BILL" ROWLES** 403<sup>rd</sup> Radio Operator from Olanta, PA. Reported by his wife, **GLORIA H. ROWLES**. God Bless!

**ALEX SEDILKO** 63<sup>rd</sup> Pilot from Corning, CA, on Oct. 4, 2000. Reported by **EDWARD G. HARRIS & FRED PETERS** of the 63<sup>rd</sup>. God Bless.

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**JIM RODELLA'S Combat Mission Diary Cont.** Jim, from Pittsburgh, PA, was a 64<sup>th</sup> Gunner.  
Mission # 1945

- 18 Apr 8 Ship 256. Target – Taito town, Formosa. Time 9:00. Total 133:35. Points 3. Total 47. Remarks – Dropped 28-120 lb. frag. Clusters. Bombs in target 100%. Bombed from 19,500 ft. Ice on plane. Lt Woolard's ship hit 13 times with ack-ack.
- 19 Apr 13 Ship 865. Target – Hong Kong harbor, China. Time 9:30. Total 50. Half way. Remarks – Dropped 8-1000 lb. bombs on shipping in the harbor, got 2 direct hits. Ack-ack pretty thick, it bounced our ship all over the sky. Lt. Olmstead's ship hit by flack. About 100 bursts – wow!
- 20 Apr 16 Ship 543. Target – Matsuyama A/D, Formosa. Time 10:05. Total 153:15. Points 3. Total 53. Remarks – Dropped 40-120 lb. frag. Clusters on parked planes, started a couple on fires. A sky full of ack-ack. Too many to count. Japs getting a lot of practice.
- 21 Apr 18 Ship 854. Target – Giran A/D, Formosa. Time 10:100. Total 153:15. Points 3. Total 56. Remarks – Dropped 12-540 lb. frag. Clusters on planes again. Heavy ack-ack from railroad guns. Lt. Piker's ship hit, 52 holes in his ship. Bomb hits unknown – cloudy. Hole through the Lt's. No. 2 gas tank. A cat [PBY-5 Catalina] followed him all the way in.
- 22 Apr 25 Ship 853. Target – Belete Pass, Luzon. Time 4:25. Total 167:40. Points 4. Total 57. Remarks – dropped 3-2000 lb. bombs on a bridge used for Jap retreat. I hit 2 near misses breaking middle span. No Ack-Ack. Ground support.

- 23 Apr 25 Ship 853. Target – Tomsui, Formosa. Time 10:00. Total 177:40. Points 3. Total 60. Remarks – dropped 24-260 lb. frags with proximity fuses set to go off at 50 ft. to wreck floatplanes. Search lights on but couldn't get thru the clouds. Ack-Ack was low could see it burst. There were fighters in the area. We had one following us; we could see the flame from his exhaust stacks. Were we glad he never made a pass. The longest night I ever had.
- 24 May 1 Ship 543. Target – Tainan Town, Formosa. Time 8:10. Total 185:50. Points 3. Remarks – dropped 16-520 lb. incendiaries on the city to burn it out. Started big fires and ruined a big section of town. Heavy Ack-Ack about 100 bursts. 3 ships holed.
- 25 May 8 Ship 543. Target – Echague A/D Luzon, Cagayan Valley. Time 4:15. Total 190:05. Points 1. Total 58 with 19 extras. Remarks – dropped 32-360 lb. frags on Jap troops trying to evacuate to Formosa by transport plane. All bombs hit target. Ground support.
- 26 May 10 Ship 390. Target – Canton A/D, China. Time 7:45. Total 203:30. Points 1. Total 59. Remarks – ran into terrific weather and had to turn back.
- 27 May 16 Ship 768. Target – Taichu A/D, Formosa. Time 10:00. Total 213:30. Points 3. Total 62 20 extra. Remarks – dropped 9-500 lb. frag clusters on enemy aircraft. All bombs hit target. Very heavy Ack-Ack and accurate, 300 bursts, 1 hole in bomb bay.
- 28 May 24 Ship 865. Target – Aparri A/D, N. Luzon. Time 6:45. Total 220:15. Points 2. Total 64. Remarks – dropped 4-2000 lb. bombs and wrecked the strip. Ground Support.
- 29 May 26 Ship 865. Target – Echague A/D in Cagayan Valley, Luzon. Time 4:20. Total 224:35. Points – nil. Remarks – dropped 4-2000 lb. bombs and hit target. Ground support.
- 30 May 30 Ship 853. Target – Koshun, Formosa. Time 6:40. Total 231:15. Points 2. Total 66. Remarks – dropped 28-260 lb. frags. No Ack-Ack. Lost No. 2 engine at the southern tip of Formosa and picked the town closest. No military target.
- 31 May 31 Ship 543. Target – Taihoku town, Formosa. Time 10:15. Total 241:30. Points 3. Total 69. 1 xtra. Remarks – dropped 8-1000 lb. G.P.s. 5 min. over target, Ack-Ack heavy and accurate over 200 bursts. 2 ships holed or hit. Bombs were 100% hits.
- 32 June 5 Ship 853. Target – Koshun, Formosa. Time 6:40. Total 248:10. Points 2. Total 71. Remarks – dropped 40-120 lb. frag clusters. Didn't reach primary. No. 3 engine out. Blew a cylinder head came back. Were jinxed – failed to take off twice and came back the third.
- 33 June 12 Ship 543. Target – Hong Kong, China. Time 10:00. Total 258:10. Points 3. Total 74. Remarks – dropped 8-55 gal. drums of Napalm on shipping in the harbor and at Victoria docks. Bombs 100% in target. Our ship got holed by heavy and accurate Ack-Ack. There was a sky full up there. Ran into bad weather on the way back.

*To be continued.*

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The following story has been taken, with permission, from the book, *MY LUCKY DICE*, by Paul Lincoln Nichols, 65<sup>th</sup> Pilot from Picayune, MS. The 43<sup>rd</sup> BG was flying from Owi at the time. Owi is a small island located off the larger island of Biak off the northeast coast of New Guinea.

Oct. 10, 1944 we flew our most memorable mission. The largest and we found out later, last remaining significant oil resource of the Japanese was located on the island of Borneo at a place called Balikpapan. Without it the Japanese war machine would come to a screeching halt. At this time we knew none of this, so on this day it was business as usual. We had our early morning briefing and learned we were to be joined by the whole wing (the entire 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force). It seemed a long way off just to hit a few oil tanks and perhaps some wells. Little did we realize it was to be so far from a routine mission, not knowing the affect of a total shortage of fuel. We always seemed to have all we needed, so we could not anticipate how desperately the Japanese needed to protect this oil field and refinery. We were scheduled to have fighter coverage to protect us over the target, but it was so far

from any of our bases that fighter coverage could only be with us for 10 minutes, hopefully over the target. We were to assemble as a wing within 10 minutes of the target at a certain point on the map, and at a specific time coordinated between the 3 group mission planners. This was anticipated to be a very complex undertaking for just getting the three groups of bombers quickly together let alone the fighter coverage over the target. We were all a great distance from our home bases and each plane (on radio silence) had to first get into Group formation, before then getting into Wing formation. The 90<sup>th</sup> (Jolly Rogers) Group flew from Biak Island. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group flew in from another island base and we of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group flew from Owi. The pre-planned position of each group of the wing formed on the leader as he took his group on a very large 30-degree turn. A lot of jockeying for position was taking place, as no one wanted to be left by themselves. As we came out of the circle to head for the target we knew we had no fighter coverage, because of our own fuel limitations we had no alternative so we headed for the drop zone. As I now picture it in my 50 plus year old memory, our position on this mission was on the right of the second element of our squadron, which was on the left side of the Group, which was on the left side of the Wing. As we approached the target we knew we were in trouble. A Japanese "Niki" twin engine light bomber was flying beside us, just out of our gunners' range. We could see the pilot's slanted eyes and we knew he was sending in radio messages giving the ground information, like our air speed, our altitude and perhaps our direction. We knew for sure the ack-ack would be accurate today. We were carrying extra fuel and (5) 500-lb. bombs. Where in the world was our fighter cover? Suddenly in the cockpit we received intercom comments that fighters were coming in from several directions. We were in the right side of our second element. I was flying the formation. Tom needed to give his attention to crew intercom needs. Above and behind us my eye caught a glimpse of an explosion. Taking a second look I saw, what was once a B-24, flittering in pieces down toward the ground. Other planes were leaving the formation with smoke trailing behind. As we opened our bomb bay doors, indicating the drop zone was only seconds away, the gunners were saying something about enemy planes coming in on our left. As I watched the bombs drop away from the other squadron planes, an explosion rocked our plane with smoke and dust flying everywhere around the cockpit and the flight deck. Needless to say this threw the fear of God into us all. All of the other planes of the squadron began to lift and pull away from us for some unknown reason. Hank (our bombardier) came over the intercom and said, "What's wrong Donny - why didn't the bombs go out?" No answer came back from Donny. Hank said he would have to leave the nose area and find out why the bombs were locked up back in the bomb bay. In the cockpit we remained frantically trying to keep up with the squadron so that we could maintain our gunfire power protection from all the enemy fighters circling around us. The next intercom words nearly destroyed us all. All Hank said was "Donny's had it - I've had to salvo the bombs." The navigator's job (Donny's) over the target was always to manually hold the lever that assures that the bomb bay doors don't vibrate shut over the target. Thus, preventing [or] impeding in any way the dropping of the bombs. An electric solenoid controls this, but this time it worked against us. Several enemy gun bullets had penetrated our plane. One shell entered behind the two pilots' seats and hit the radio panel. Another entered below the flight deck then entered Donny's parachute backpack, exploding into Donny killing him instantly. Had Donnie not stopped that bullet, we figured it would have entered our bomb bay fuel tank and blown us all into kingdom come. Donny was still sitting up in a vertical position and had only flinched enough to close the bomb bay doors just enough to stop the remainder of the bombs from dropping. I say "Remainder" because one of our bombs did drop on the target but the remaining (4) 500-lb. bombs had hung up. As all of this was going on we continued our efforts in the cockpit to keep up with the rest of the squadron. It was a big help to have Hank salvo the balance of our bomb load even if it did just drop uselessly into the Pacific Ocean. We weren't about to go around again by ourselves.

In order to prevent enemy aircraft from attacking, the leader of the squadron chose to head into a large cloudbank up ahead of us. Normally, when entering a cloud while flying in formation, it is still possible to see the lead plane but on this occasion the clouds were too dense to see from wing tip to wing tip. In order to prevent an airborne crash, which was all we needed to complete our day, we had

to turn slightly away from the lead plane a few degrees, hold our air speed and hope the cloud would break up in time for us to reform without too much time loss. It seemed forever before we came out of that cloud and when we did, there was no squadron in sight. Below and over to our right I spotted a 2 plane bomber formation. Tom and I immediately agreed to head down and join it. I pulled back on the throttles and pushed the nose down. We pulled up beside the 2 planes which were from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group. At this point we didn't care who they were but were mighty happy to once again have the full protection of 36 guns instead of only our 12. Soon we saw our squadron passing above us, but we decided to remain where we were until we could each once again separate into individual aircraft entities returning to our various destinations, thus saving several needed drops of gas.

We had begun to realize shortly after leaving the target area that our #3 engine was not running properly and was now seriously overheating. All we needed this far from home and friendly faces was a fire, so we hit the fire extinguisher and feathered #3 engine. With it went the hydraulic system and one fourth of our power, but of course we were also burning one fourth less gas or at least some less gas because throttles had to be advanced to keep proper air speed. As to the hydraulics this meant that we would not have any way to get the wheels down or the flaps down except by a hand pump which was on my side of the cockpit. The worst prospect, however, was the fact that if we ever did get on the ground in one piece, we would have no brakes to stop at the end of the strip. With Donny gone now it was Hank's job to give us the heading back to Morotai, which was a still unfinished air field and the field we planned to use from the beginning of this mission. It was simply too far for us to ever be able to make it back to Owi nonstop. Since we were in trouble with our hydraulics, we had to circle the field to get everything down (flaps and wheels) for proper landing status. Fuel was getting critically low. Hank had brought us out right on the mark at Morotai for which we were all eternally grateful. Unbeknownst to the cockpit, some things were going on in the tail area of the plane. Our flight engineer, Sgt. Kenroy, and the others back there had tied 2 parachutes, one to each of the waste gun mounts. Knowing we had a hydraulic problem, Ron Kenroy decided this would perhaps help us stop. If they broke, nothing would be lost except a couple of parachutes. As we touched down and the nose wheel finally came down, we suddenly slowed up and we weren't applying brakes yet. We in the cockpit wondered what in the world was going on. We slowed up so fast that we didn't need any brakes, but instead needed throttle to get to the parking end of the strip and only used brakes during our final swing into the parking space we were directed to. Kenroy came up between the pilots' seats, beaming, and told us what he had done. Tom and I had glanced back when we slowed up without brakes so we knew the parachutes were there. We thanked Kenroy for his great idea. We may have been the first airplane to use parachutes to assist landing slowdown, a practice that has since been used by many jets, especially during the experimental phases of design verification. When we exited the plane, we had to crawl right past Donny at which time I for one said my good-byes to a good friend. It wasn't easy. Tom had the chaplain give Donny his last rites, but made sure he was first baptized. Donald Hunt would no longer be with us in body, but none of us still living have forgotten much of what we knew about this fine young man who was killed while fighting for his country. As I said earlier, Donny's favorite expression was "Follow me and you'll wear diamonds in your teeth." We would now never know, at least in this world. On that mission five of our crew were wounded and received Purple Hearts. A piece of metal was found inside our bomb bay fuel tank. In addition, a chunk of skin off our plane ended up within inches of my left hand at the throttle as I flew formation over the target. I still have that piece of metal plus the watch chain loop from Donny's government issue watch. All of his things were returned to us at the squadron and we felt that this was one thing that surely didn't need to be sent to his folks back home because it was nearly cut in two by the shrapnel of the bullet that had killed our buddy. That hellish day was still not over though. After eating and perhaps a couple of beers at a makeshift club we went to bed only to be awakened just after midnight by an air raid. This was jim-dandy. The bombs hit an ammunition or fuel storage area. It was hard to tell which, but there were numerous explosions and boiling balls of fire. We didn't even bother to look for a deep ditch during that raid. I guess we figured that if they hadn't gotten us through the day, surely we would live

through the night, and we did. Although we knew nothing about what was going on in Europe, I can honestly say that the Jewish people were not the only ones going through the holocaust. We left our plane there per orders and few back to Owi with another crew. The next day saw us safely back to our Owi Island home and to a new life as seasoned combat veterans.

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

From *Marketing Resources*, Issue No. 8, 1995:

Sign in Norwegian cocktail lounge: "Ladies are requested not to have children in the bar."

Sign in religious artifacts stores: "If you're interested in life after death, try robbing this store."

Sign in Bangkok dry cleaners: "Drop your pants here."

Two elderly men, who had not seen each other in 50 years, met one day. They talked for a few minutes when the first one said to the other, "I can't recall your name." So his friend told him his name. They talked on for a few more minutes, when the second one said, "I don't remember your name." There was dead silence for about 30 seconds before the first one said, "When do you have to know?"

The following are actual classified ads taken from newspapers around the nation.

Free Yorkshire Terrier. 8 Years Old. Hateful Little Dog.

Free Puppies. ½ Cocker Spaniel. ½ Sneaky Neighbor's Dog.

2 Wire Mesh Butchering Gloves. 1 5-finger, 1 3-finger, Pair: \$15.

Snow Blower for Sale. Used Only On Snowy Days.

Cows for Sale. Never Bred Calves. Also 1 Gay Bull for Sale.

Bill's Septic Cleaning. "We haul American made products."

Georgia Peaches. California Grown - 89 cents lb.

Nice Parachute: Never Opened - Used Once.

Respectively Submitted - Jim Cherkauer, Secretary/Editor

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. AVOID SENDING MATERIAL AT THE LAST MINUTE IF YOU CAN SEND IT EARLIER - PLEASE.**

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 do not send attachments you did not create. To avoid downloading a virus, the editor will not open other attachments.**

**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**.