



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

**NEWSLETTER 77th EDITION
JANUARY 2001**



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

Welcome to the new millennium! The hype of last year was erroneous since technically, the new millennium started 1 January 2001. And now, the 20th century is behind us. It was the most violent century to date, but also saw the dawning of new technologies, dramatic advances in medicine, an information explosion and a growing global economy. The new millennium has been welcomed by many as a symbol of hope and change. We certainly hope so, but consider the magnitude of just a few of the problems we face. **POLUTION:** If present trends continue, the natural environment will be increasingly stressed since industrialized nations are causing environmental damage on a global scale. **SICKNESS:** By the year 2020, noncommunicable diseases are expected to account for 70% of the deaths in developing regions. **POVERTY:** Nearly 1.3 billion people live on less than one dollar a day, and another billion cannot meet their daily consumption requirements (UN report 1999). **WAR:** Violence within various lands could reach unprecedented levels. Generated by ethnic, tribal and religious divisions, such violence will form the most common type of conflict in the next quarter century killing hundreds of thousands of people each year (U.S. Commission on National Security). The roots of these problems are greed, distrust and selfishness. Until the power of love exceeds the love of power, things will not change. Not a pretty picture, or optimistic outlook, is it? But, just perhaps...being Americans and living in the greatest of nations, our leaders can influence a lot of the outcomes. We pray that that may be so!

God bless you and yours and may God bless America. **HAVE A HEALTHY & PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.**

Note: The 22nd Bomb Group agreed to allow Larry Hickey, the publisher, until 31 December to complete the manuscript for their book. Therefore, the 22nd's book will not be in print before mid-March which will put the 43rd's book back a few months in its publication.

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

**43rd BOMB GROUP REUNION
San Antonio**

Income

Advance Treasure 12/30/99		1,515.00
Advance Treasure 8/4/00		6,000.00
Reunion Fees	\$110 x 196	21,560.00
Dues & Donations		326.00
Profit "Local Arrangement"		93.15
	Total	29,494.15

Expenses

Buses		2,100.00
Bands & Speaker		1,725.00
Lunch, Kelly AFB		1,285.20
Dinner, Randolph AFB		2,913.60
Hyatt		16,201.93
	Food	15,205.22
	Coffee	507.75
	Audio / Visual	488.96
	Total	24,225.73

Advance	7,500.00*
Final Statement	5,268.42

Cost of Reunion to 43rd Bomb Group* 2,231.58*

* Included is \$500.00 prepaid for retaining the orchestra for the Nashville reunion.

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

Pres. Max M. Axelsen has asked the Secretary to insert in this Newsletter a job description of the position of Secretary. Your current secretary will no longer serve in that capacity after Dec. 31, 2001.

JOB DESCRIPTION for SECRETARY of 43rd BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

1. Take and record minutes of the Board of Directors
2. Take and record minutes of the Group at the annual reunion
3. Distribute minutes of Board of Directors and the Group meeting in the Newsletter
4. Keep the record of the squadron directors' names and terms of office.
Notify each squadron of upcoming election of a director
Publish the membership of the Board of Directors in the Newsletter each year or after any changes that may occur
5. Notify veterans' organizations of each upcoming reunion along with the appropriate details
Notify several publications of upcoming reunion along with the appropriate details
6. Handle the correspondence directed to the secretary by mail, e-mail or telephone
7. Keep and record all expenses incurred as Secretary to submit to the Association Treasurer
8. Prepare and publish the Association Newsletter

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

EDWARD L. GAMMILL, 63rd Crew/Flight Chief from Phoenix, AZ, has volunteered to be in charge of recruitment for our Association. We have been without anyone being in charge of that task for over 2 years and the job is one that is vital to our organization. ED has Internet and e-mail capabilities. He has instituted a membership application form that is currently on the Association's web site. As former 43rd men find our web site, they can also download an application form and get it into the mail without having to contact anyone in the Association directly. Give ED all of your support and direct to ED anyone you know of who should be a member of our organization.

ED has been pursuing his new position so well that he tried to recruit **LEO H. THALER**, 403rd Flight Engineer from Hollis, NY, to join the Association. LEO has been a member for a long time now, but something that someone put on the 43rd's web site led both LEO and the editor to believe that LEO was not a member. Neither ED nor the editor bothered to look at the Roster.

LEO wrote ED and thanked him for the application, but declined to accept a second membership. LEO says that neither he nor anyone in his crew has attended any reunions as far as he knows. Their pilot was **CALVIN C. MERCER**. They served in the 403rd from February '45 through October '45.

It has been mentioned before in this Newsletter that many of those in the original 19th BG came directly from the 6th AAF with headquarters in Panama. Later in the war a large number of 6th AAF personnel were sent to the 5th AAF and some, including the editor, ended up in the 43rd BG. One of those who started in the 6th AAF and became a member of the original 19th BG is **FRANK HOHMANN**, 65th Flight Engineer from Princeton Junction, NJ.

FRANK has been given a rather large collection of photos that had been collected by the WELLS family in Guatemala City, Guatemala. It seems that during the war the WELLS family opened their home to our military personnel as a place to socialize when not on duty. FRANK was able to get some of the photos to persons he knew who were still with us such as **CARL CRAMER**, 64th Pilot and C.O. from Knoxville, TN. He has a couple of group pictures - one of officers and one of enlisted men. He located one man in one of the photos. No knowing what else to do, FRANK is thinking that maybe the proper thing to do with these is to send them to a Robert L. Taylor of Ottumwa, IA. Bob has the Antique Airfield, A.A. Press and Airpower Museum, Inc., where he has been assembling a 6th AAF display covering Central and South America.

For the past 9 years Bob has been publishing *The Caribbean Breeze II*, a nice glossy with colored pictures that he receives from readers. The cost is \$5.00 for single copies. FRANK thinks that perhaps some of our members who also served in the 6th AAF might want to know about this and to contribute material to Bob at:

Antique Airfield Press 22001 Bluegrass Road Ottumwa, IA 52501-8569.

Phone 515-938-2773 Fax 515-938-2084.

FRANK writes that after talking with **PAUL NICHOLS**, 65th Pilot from Picayune, MS, Paul interested him in writing about his experiences during the war. This was after PAUL learned of FRANK's involvement with the Australian War Museum in Canberra. FRANK has sent to the museum a total of three 8mm silent movies he took while in the 19th BG in 1942. One is of Mareeba, Cairn and Port Moresby. Another 200' reel was taken in Brisbane and Sydney while the third, also 200', was taken at Mareeba/Cairns. This museum has the facilities to preserve this type of old film.

FRANK and **VIRGINIA** could not make the last reunion due to some minor health problems.

A couple of our members attended a symposium at Fredericksburg, TX, on Sept. 30 - Oct. 1st. Our President **MAX M. AXELSEN**, 403rd Pilot from San Antonio, TX, attended as did **JAMES T. MURPHY**, Past President and 63rd Pilot from Huntsville, AL, who presented a talk on "Skip Bombing."

LEWIS B. DAWS, 65th Aircraft Maintenance from Rialto, CA, informed the editor that he had heard from **ERNIE HAND** of Carmel, ME. ERNIE informed LEW that **JAMES T. "MAC" McLURE**, 65th, is in very poor condition in the Veterans Home in Bangor, ME.

LEW says that MAC was on his crew at one time and was with him when B-17 *BLACK MAGIC* cracked up. LEW had been in the process of getting a new computer equipped to his specifications when he sent his e-mail late in September.

MAC's address is **Maine-Veterans Home Rm. D-26, 44 Hogan Rd. Bangor, ME 04401.**

In the past couple of issues of this Newsletter there have some accounts about the first bombing of Davao, Mindanao, Philippines, and the exploit of **ORLAND POEL**, 403rd Flight Engineer from Green Bay, WI, who helped save his plane and that of a wingman on that mission. ORLAND wrote the editor to set the record straight. Read his story in his own words.

I don't know who put me in for the citation, but I was the engineer on that 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 controls. I noticed that the autopilot was on at that time; I turned it off. After that he [copilot] 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.

Sending the editor his dues for 2001 plus a donation for the Newsletter is **LOTUS H. "JACK" FULTZ**, 63rd Top Turret Gunner from Madison, IN. JACK found the July Newsletter of great interest to him. He did not make our San Antonio reunion, but has been in San Antonio as a sports announcer and has visited many of the points of interest. In particular he cited, "The story of 'Miss Liberty' exciting, nostalgic...and Fisher the DFC awarded by General Kenny...WoW! Shad's 'Pilot Wisdom'...an incident of jewels. I was not a pilot in WWII but I belonged to the AOPA." He went on to say that he enjoyed "The Dayton Story and the numerous sketches about so many." He enjoyed the humor as well as finding the diary logs most interesting.

JACK writes that his crew was "A Born Loser." Their B-24 #812 with Pilot **THOMAS "BILL" BURWELL**, from Urbana, IL, at the controls took off on August 14, 1945 at 2030. They were fully armed and off to attack the Japanese. As reported in a previous Newsletter, **NEAL FUGATE**, 63rd Pilot from Rancho Bernardo, CA, took off in #025 at 1938 hours followed by **P. S. CRESSER** and crew in the 63rd B-24 #969 at 2018 hours. "CRESSER's crew scored. FUGATE's crew scored. We jettisoned our bomb load, after a mishap in the transfer of fuel, and returned to Ie Shima. I swear to God that I had a feeling when we aborted that it was a grave mistake and we would rue the day. If...if...if...we had completed our mission FUGATE and CRESSER had the five ship convoy softened - CRESSER two...FUGATE one (a monster)...two left like fish in a barrel and we didn't get 'em." JACK is sorry that their crew did not get to bomb any of those ships that night but says the FUGATE's and CRESSER's crews of the 63rd Squadron, 43rd Bomb Group, 5th AAF are to be congratulated for their success. "...It couldn't happen to nicer guys and crews upholding the tradition of all valiant Ken's Men."

The 11 men making up their crew included **THOMAS BURWELL** Pilot from Urbana, IL, not located; **MYRON "MIKE" OCEAN** Copilot from Pompano Beach, FL, deceased; **WALLY LEASKE** Radar from Seattle, WA, not located; **LEO BRENNEN** Navigator from Philadelphia, PA, deceased; **AL BUCHTA** Bombardier from Detroit, MI, not located; **BOB MAHLKE** Flight Engineer from Monon, IN, not located; **EARL FRANCIS** Radio from Hamilton, OH, deceased; **E. H. "BUD" SAMMIS** Nose Gunner from Pompano Beach, FL; **DAVID ITALINO** Armament Gunner from Boston, MA, not located; **MAC McDONALD** Tail Gunner from Michigan, not located; and **L. H. "JACK" FULTZ** Top Turret from Madison, IN.

JACK writes that he and SAMMIS would drive others up a wall. Before each flight they would go around giving away their belongings to others telling them that the mission that night would be it – they would crash and burn. The other crewmen called them the “Crash & Burn Idiots.”

In the days following the surrender of the Japanese, the 63rd flew planes to Japan. Their crew flew paratroopers to Tokyo with orders that if fired upon, they were to drop the paratroopers. If not fired on, they were to land with their cargo. JACK did not make that mission as he had acute hepatitis with jaundice, jungle rot in his ears, a heart murmur, two broken hands, banged up knees and other ailments.

Previously he had suffered a cracked collarbone, an injured shoulder and jaw along with a head injury after being thrown into a ring post while engaged in a wrestling match for the troops. At another time he had a severe ankle injury he suffered when he jumped from a B-24 that they thought was about to explode. He writes that he never received a penny for disability for any of the infirmities that he suffers from the war. What with jungle rot, the pounding of those 4 Pratt & Whitney engines, machine gun fire, etc., he was denied any compensation for loss of hearing on the grounds that he incurred a cauliflower ear from the wrestling shows in which he competed for the troops.

But he says that he flew with a fine crew and is alive today despite the fact that he thinks that he is a born loser.

A short letter from **MIKE MEDNICK**, 63rd Ball Turret Gunner, reports that the 2000 Roster does not have his wife, **GAIL**, listed. He also enclosed his telephone number **845-434-5746** and duty. **MIKE** writes that he is enjoying the Newsletter.

MICHAEL J. O'MALLEY, 63rd Navigator from Pittsburg, PA, has been enjoying the Newsletter also. Reading in the July edition about the last two missions of the war (pp. 8-9) **MICHAEL** recalls both **NEAL FUGATE**, 63rd Pilot from Rancho Bernardo, CA, and **PAUL CRESSER**. **MICHAEL** was serving on the crew of **EARL BISHOP**, 63rd Pilot from Chittenden, VT, and all of these men were training at Tonopah Field, NV, for OTU before being shipped to Langley Field, VA, for radar training.

MICHAEL says that he was close to **PAUL** and members of his crew. **PAUL** died in January 1985. His widow, **MILLE**, now lives in Vero Beach, FL. **PAUL**'s navigator was **GEORGE LEAHEY**. **GEORGE** and his wife, **NELLIE**, passed away in California in February 1998. Bombardier on that crew was **ROY VODA**. **ROY** and his wife, **DONNA**, live in Tucson, AZ.

ROY stayed in the service and went on to pilot training and became an airplane commander. He flew B-29s in the Korean War and served two tours of duty in the Vietnam War. He retired as a Lt. Colonel. **DONNA** is not in the best of health so they do not travel much.

Also in his letter **MICHAEL** writes that he used to keep in touch with others from the 63rd, but as time passes the number of such contacts has dwindled. He does keep in contact with his pilot, **EARL BISHOP**. His copilot lives in Kingsport, TN, but the rest of the crew are deceased. The late **RICHARD “DICK” WOODS**, was their Mickey man (Radar/ Navigator). He says that the only other 63rd man he is still in contact with is **JOE ARRIGO**, a Navigator, who lives in Manhattan Beach, CA.

Enclosed with **MICHAEL**'s letter is a copy of the orders awarding the officers of **CRESSOR**'s crew air medals.

Second Lieutenant **PAUL B. CRESSOR, JR.**, Pilot
Flight Officer **RUSSELL E. GRAEFF**, Co-pilot
Second Lieutenant **ROBERT W. JONES**, Radar operator
Second Lieutenant **GEORGE W. LEAHEEY**, Navigator
Second Lieutenant **ROY F. VODA**, Bombardier.

The citation is as follows:

For meritorious achievement while participating in an aerial flight over the Tsu Shima Straits, Japan, on 13 August 1945. These officers were members of a B-24 aircraft which made a night attack against Japanese shipping in the Tsu Shima Straits. They made 2 runs over a 4000-ton enemy freighter-transport, and the explosions from their 500-pound bombs

caused the vessel to explode and sink. Flying through antiaircraft fire which tore several holes in the tail of their plane, they bombed another 4000-ton Japanese freighter-transport and scored a direct hit which sank the vessel. The courage and devotion to duty displayed by these officers during this flight reflect great credit on the United States Army Air Forces.

The following story comes from **PATRICK J. FREEMAN**, 65th Pilot from Eagle River, WI. He relayed the story to the editor via the phone. The editor does not take shorthand so some of the message may be a bit mixed up, but the editor will do his best.

On reading on page 17 in the October Newsletter about B-24 *LUCKY LUCILLE*, PAT wanted to share more information about that plane and some of the crews that flew it. He says that the first B-24s to reach the 65th Sqd. were flown over in 1943 by pilots such as **JOHN TAYLOR**, **FRANK WRIGHT**, “Mother” **MILLER**, **OSTIN MATISON** and **PARKER STAFFORD FLOYD**. **FLOYD** and crew brought over *LUCKY LUCILLE* that they had named. PAT flew as copilot on **TAYLOR**’s crew. When they arrived in Hawaii, nose turrets were added to the B-24s. In Australia further modifications were made on the planes. They joined the 65th at Port Moresby and Jackson Strip or 7-mile where **JOSH BARNES** was the C.O. Before their tours were over **WRIGHT** would become the C.O. of the 65th.

TAYLOR was killed over Hansa Bay in 1944. PAT was no longer flying on that crew by his own choice. Earlier **FLOYD** and crew had been shot down on their second mission.

PAT became copilot on a newly formed crew that he called the Million Dollar Crew. They flew *LUCKY LUCILLE* on many of their missions. The crew consisted of Pilot **PARKER S. FLOYD**, Copilot **PAT FREEMAN**, Bombardier **W. W. FRAZIER** from Philadelphia, PA, Navigator **MAX OSBORNE**, Past President of the Association who hales from Sun Lakes, AZ, Flight Engineer **LEE ELANGER**, Radio Operator **EARL CHASE**, **DONALD “KUPIE” ADAMSEN**, **OLSON**, Tail Gunner **DEFFINDERFER** and Waist Gunner **NEYOS**. **CHASE** had been a paratrooper who was transferred to the 43rd. **NEYOS** had been a high school teacher and an excellent shot according to PAT. **TOM GAULA** served as the crew chief of *LUCKY LUCILLE* at that time.

PAT says that he was in Townsville, Australia, from Oct. 18 – Oct. 31, 1943, recovering from malaria and other diseases.

PAT went on to say that he had heard that *LUCKY LUCILLE* was flying a group of crew chiefs and other ground personnel to Australia on their way back to the States when the plane landed in Milne Bay, N.G. Upon landing the landing gear collapsed. This plane was lost but no one was injured.

E-mail from **KATHY COSTELLO**, recent Associate member, whose uncle, **DAN COSTELLO**, 64th Sqd., was KIA on July 11, 1943, relates that when she read the diary of **DAVID ADAMS**, 403rd Pilot from Bellevue, NE, in the October Newsletter, she noted the July 11th entry. He mentioned that the B-24 piloted by **HAMMOND** spun in with loss of crew. She felt that perhaps **DAVID** witnessed the crash of *DOUBLE TROUBLE* #42-40671 at the time. This was the crew on which her uncle had served.

KATHY wanted **DAVID**’s phone number, but the best the editor could do was to provide her with his home address. A search on the Internet for his phone number came up empty.

She says that she wants to attend the memorial service of the Association in Nashville in 2001.

Her address is 1816 Leona Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45238. Her home phone is 513-451-7556. Her e-mail address is <costellok@fuse.net>.

KATHY has also sent the Association a very generous donation for which we are grateful. She contacted **DAVID ADAMS** and he did indeed witness the crash of her uncle’s plane. Our own Vice President, **ROGER G. KETTLESON**, 64th Pilot from Las Vegas, NV, may also have been a witness to that accident.

The October 2000 Newsletter of the 90th Bomb Group Association reports that they had a very successful reunion in Las Vegas, NV, this past Oct. 1-4. They had a city tour to a chocolate factory, Cactus Gardens, Liberace Museum, the Las Vegas Strip and downtown Las Vegas. They also had a tour of Nellis A. F. Base followed by lunch in the Officers Club. Other tours went to Red Rock Canyon or Hoover Dam.

HARLEY HAYDEN, 65th Gunner from Hannibal, MO, reported that his brother **KEN HAYDEN**, from Jacksonville, AR, who also served in the 65th, sent him a newspaper article which **HARLEY** included in his letter.

KEN served with **HARLEY** in tech supply. **HARLEY** became a Gunner and **KEN** became a Flight Engineer on both the B-17 and the B-24 in which he completed 50 missions. When **KEN** visited **HARLEY** this past summer, he said that he would send **HARLEY** the article cited below.

HARLEY says that he is a member of the 80 club along with lots of other men in the association. He reports that he is doing well with his "new" knee. He reads each Newsletter a few times to make sure that he digests everything. He asks the staff to keep up the good work.

The aforementioned article is taken from the June 12, 2000 **AIR FORCE TIMES** on page 40 entitled **Transitions: HISTORY IN BLUE** by Robert F. Dorr. The article is entitled "Deadly WWII crash kept quiet." It concerns a B-17C that crashed on June 14, 1943, at Bakers Creek, North Queensland, Australia, killing 40 of 41 one men aboard. Due to wartime restrictions on news, this was never mentioned during WWII.

A group of people, including some Air Force representatives, were to gather at Bakers Creek last June to remember this tragedy. This crash remains the worst in Australian aviation history.

The article states that there is some evidence that General MacArthur "... ordered a clampdown on any news of this crash because of the implications for morale." This had been reported by Army Air Forces Capt. Samuel Cutler who was the commander of the Red Cross rest area at the time. He had listed the accident as due to pilot error. His son, Retired Air Force Maj. Robert S. Cutler, professor at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., was to be among those gathering at Bakers Creek for the memorial service.

The article goes on to state that in Europe the maximum number of men allowed in a B-17 when it was used to transport personnel was 18-20. It claims that the B-17C at Bakers Creek was grossly overloaded. The plane took off and while making a slow 180° turn to get on a heading to Port Moresby hit some trees and cartwheeled. The sole survivor of the crash was Cpl. Foye E. Roberts who currently resides in Wichita Falls, KS.

The B-17C was operated by the 46th Troop Carrier Squadron, 317th Troop Carrier Group. It had been formed as a C-47 Skytrain transport outfit. It had been stripped of its C-47s when they were needed in New Guinea. As replacements they received a number of different old aircraft including an LB-30 Liberator, a Lockheed Electra and the Flying Fortress.

In the margins of the article, **KEN** writes that he has a vague memory of reading about this in the *Guinea Gold* paper. He did not return to the States until December 1943. He also notes that with the skeleton crew and 40 passengers, the B-17 load, including fuel, would be about 6,500 pounds. He wrote that with a crew of 10 men, 5,000 pounds of bombs and a full load of fuel, the planeload would be over 6,500 pounds. "We always flew with over 6,500 weight."

HARLEY adds that, "When we left Bangor all we had were a B-18, a B-17C, an LB-30, and Lockheed Hudsons. We also had 2 Stearman Trainers." This was mentioned because the article referred the odd collection of planes given to the 317th Troop Cargo Group after being stripped of all of its C-47s.

After reading in the October Newsletter of the loss of Lt. **MOORE**'s plane and crew on March 3, 1943 in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea, **FRANCIS P. DENAULT**, 63rd Pilot from Deerfield, FL, wrote to say that he was the pilot of *LULU BELLE* #124358 on that mission. He enclosed a copy of the part of his diary about that mission.

Feb. 25, 1943 Stayed on alert waiting for the weather to clear up. It was reported that the Japanese were sending a convoy south along the north coast of New Britain under the cover of the bad weather.

Feb. 26 We took off about 10 AM and went looking for the convoy along the north coast of New Britain. The weather was very bad and we were unable to find any ships in the area. We bombed the runway at Gasmata at the western end of New Britain and returned home.

Feb 27 & 28 We stayed on alert. The weather was too bad to do anything. A B-24 of the 90th Bomb Group on a reconnaissance mission sighted some ships through a break in the clouds at about 6 PM on the 28 of Feb. He counted a dozen ships or more steaming west towards the Bismarck Sea. All units of the 43rd Bomb Gp. were alerted for possible strikes as soon as the weather permitted. We knew now that the Japanese were sending a major convoy south to supply their troops in New Guinea.

Mar. 2 The weather finally lifted enough for us to take off. At 9 AM on the 2 of March 1943, the 63rd squadron of the 43rd Bomb GP took off and headed for the Bismarck Sea. Major Ed Scott our squadron commander was the first off, Harry Staley was next and I was the third one off. The three of us teamed up in a three-ship formation. Staley on the right wing and I was on the left wing. The rest of the squadron flew as single ships. We found the convoy in the Bismarck Sea off the coast of Lae. We could see the ships through the clouds. We dropped down below the clouds to 7,000 ft. Scott picked out a large transport to make a bomb run on. We were down to 6500 ft. by this time. We made a diagonal run across the ship from about 10 o'clock. We were each carrying 4-1,000 lb. bombs. About this time fighters started making passes at us from all angles.

The fighters attacked us at the same time the destroyers were shooting at us. I had instructed Lt. Kreswicki the bombardier to drop his bombs in coordination with Major Scott's plane. That way we would get a good pattern blanketing the ship. Ignoring all of the action around us we held steady on our bomb run. Between us we dropped 12-1000 lb. bombs and scored 2 or 3 hits. A huge cloud of smoke rose from the ship and then there were several explosions. During the bomb run we were hit by some enemy shells. The left windshield was blown out and I was hit in the left arm and Lt. Anderson the copilot was hit in the neck. My Rayban glasses saved my eyes as several pieces hit me in the face. Through all this I kept my eyes glued on Major Scott's plane. After the explosions the ship started to sink. The three of us stayed together and left the area. How we got out of there alive is a mystery to me. After reading Lex McAulay's book, *The Battle of the Bismarck Sea*, I learned that the name of the ship was the Kyokusie Maru. Lex McAulay was an Australian soldier who spent a great deal of time researching the Japanese archives after the war. From his book I also learned that the explosions were caused by 2,000 cubic meters of munitions stored in the ship. There were 1200 army troops on board and most of them were lost. The ship was burning fiercely when we left the area. The three of us had struck the first blow of the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. All four squadrons of the 43rd Gp. attacked the convoy, the 63, 64, 65, and 403, hitting and sinking several ships. What happened after that became history.

It was reported that there were about 22 ships in the convoy. All but one destroyer was damaged or sunk. The lone destroyer was seen heading northwest in the Bismarck Sea on the 4th of March 1943.

We returned to Port Moresby and landed safely. Lt. Anderson and I were sent to the base hospital. They patched us up and released us. The airplane was repaired and put back in service. The *LULU BELLE* would fly again. (That was the name of our ship.)

March 3rd The next morning at 10 AM we took off again to attack the convoy with 3 other ships of the 63rd squadron. We found some of the ships just off the coast heading for Lae on the north coast of New Guinea. Bill Thompson was leading our formation with Lt. Moore on his right wing and I was on the left wing. Lt. Kirby in the rear. Just as we started a bomb run

on one of the ships, the Japanese fighters hit us. We each dropped 4-500 lb. bombs on the ship. We were at 7500 ft. and the bombs straddled the ship. We could not tell if we had any hits. I was too busy flying and watching the Japanese fighters. Two or 3 of the fighters had smoke streaming out of them so I guess we made some hits. Lt. Thompson then turned left and made a bomb run on another ship, dropping the remainder of our bombs. Just when we finished our bomb run Lt. Moore's ship was hit by a Japanese shell of some sort and fire was coming out of the bomb bay section. About that time a Japanese fighter came straight in on me. They usually came straight in and then rolled underneath the plane. This one came straight in with no roll. I figured he was going to ram me. At the last second I lifted my right wing and skidded left. There wasn't anybody on my left wing. I figured I'm not going to heaven this way. I don't know where he went but he missed me. By this time Lt. Moore's crew was bailing out of their ship. As they were floating down in their parachutes the Japanese fighter pilots shot them down in their parachutes. This was the type of dirty war it was. We shot down 3 Japanese fighters that day. It was a vicious encounter. Word of the strafing of Lt. Moore's crew reached all of the Fifth Air Force personnel. Every plane that the Fifth Air Force could get in the air was sent to attack the convoy. Nothing was left floating and every lifeboat was strafed and sunk. The water was red and the white sharks had a field day. The Fifth Air Force fighters and B-25s strafed everything they could find. Lex McAulay in his book, *THE BATTLE OF THE BISMARCK SEA*, gives a complete list of all the Japanese ships sunk and the personnel lost in the battle. Fifth Air Force A-20s and a squadron of Australian Beaufighters were sent in to mop up the remains of the convoy. The first days of March 1943 had seen the first great victory for the US Army Air Force. The victory had been achieved by an Air Force poorly short of aircraft and supplies but rich in the priceless attributes of courage and initiative. It was a land battle fought at sea and won from the air. It was a first battle ever won completely by air power. This was the turning point in the Pacific war. From this point on the Japanese started losing ground.

This may be of interest to those men who participated in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. Lt. Commander B. John Szirt of the Royal Australian Navy Reserve (RANR) is seeking the signatures of airmen who participated in that battle. He will acknowledge all such signatures with a letter and photo to sign. He has been collecting these for some time.

His address is 2 Graham Place, Earlwood, NSW, 2206, Australia. His e-mail address is <navylc1@optushome.com.au>.

HAROLD W. DONNER, 63rd Gunner from Tonawanda, NY, mailed in his 2001 dues along with a few comments. He writes that after studying the July and October Newsletters he has it figured out that the first attack on Davao, Mindanao, Philippines since April 14, 1942 was by the 63rd crew of Lt. **REDDING** on Aug. 6-7, 1944. On Aug. 6-7 the crew of Lt. **KENT ZIMMERMAN**, Pilot from San Antonio, TX, attacked Davao. **HAROLD** served on this crew. On Aug. 7-8 the crew of Lt. **BRADFORD** attacked that same target. This is the crew on which **FLOYD REDDING** of North Fort Meyers, FL, served as copilot.

HAROLD says that **FLOYD** is one of the very few from this era that he knows of and would not have known of that mission if it were not for the clipping he sent to the editor that appeared in the July Newsletter.

He writes that he remembers the enlisted men on **BRADFORD**'s crew. While on leave in Sydney he and **CLETO HANCHARUK**, from **BRADFORD**'s crew, posed before a recruiting poster for the RAAF. They had a passer by take a photo of them in this pose with **HAROLD**'s camera. He says that he still has the picture.

He says that he just discovered **JAMES V. BROWN**, 63rd Navigator/Bombardier from Oxnard, CA, in the 2000 Roster. JAMES was mentioned in the January Newsletter (p. 15) as one of those men who participated on that first raid of Davao.

ORLEY B. CAUDILL, 403rd Navigator from San Antonio, TX, regrets that he and his wife, **JUDY**, could not be at the 2000 reunion, but noticed from the October Newsletter that it was a fine reunion. Looking at the listing of those who attended the San Antonio reunion, he noticed the names of **STEVE BRUMM** and **VIC BRUMM**. They are the son and grandson of Sgt. **FRANK D. BRUMM**. **ORLEY** is seeking their addresses as he has information regarding **FRANK** that they probably would appreciate having.

If anyone knows the address of either or both of these men, **ORLEY** would appreciate hearing from you. **ORLEY** is listed in the 2000 Roster.

A sister-in-law of **ALEX SEDILKO**, 19th, 90th and 43rd Radio Operator from Corning, CA, notified both **EDWARD G. HARRIS**, 63rd Radar Operator from Knoxville, TN, and **FRED PETERS**, 63rd Personnel from San Mateo, CA, of the death of **ALEX**. **ALEX** was the Radio Operator on the crew of **ALBERT BROWNFELD**. When **BROWNFELD** became C.O., the late **ORION ROGERS** took over as Pilot of the crew in which **EDWARD** also served.

ALEX made the Air Force his career. He had flown with the 19th BG and the 90th BG as well as with the 43rd. He finished his tour with the 43rd at Clark Field. He was on the way to the 90th BG's national reunion, when he stopped in Sacramento, CA, to visit his sister-in-law. While there he was taken ill, diagnosed with colon cancer and did not survive the needed surgery.

FRED said that **ALEX** had flown in the Berlin airlift as did so many of our men who made the Air Force their career after WWII.

A lengthy letter with much news arrived from **FRED C. COOKE**, 65th Navigator from Fort Walton Beach, FL. His letter reveals that he and his wife, **PAMELA**, have moved to a condo on the waterfront. Here are changes to make in your 2000 Roster - zip-32548 and phone - 850-244-3777 as well as adding **PAMELA**.

FRED said that the Memorial remarks by our Chaplain, **ROLAND T. FISHER**, 63rd Pilot from Lake Oswego, OR, were clear and eloquent, and that they "...really gripped my memory."

PAMELA has recovered nicely from her stroke and they will be visiting Australia between Nov. 12th and Jan. 7, 2001. **FRED** says that from their new condo it is easy to travel, they just lock the doors and go.

He says that reading in the Oct. Newsletter the article about **FRED F. WESCHE**, 64th Pilot, it seemed like the story was almost a parallel to his own experiences from 1942-43. **COOKE** (too many Freds here to use that first name) was a navigator in the 1st Provisional Bomb Squadron formed at McDill Field, FL in 1942. He joined the organization in May 1942 immediately after graduating from Navigation School at Kelly Field, TX on May 2, 1942.

The entire outfit boarded a Pullman at Tampa, FL, and rode to McClelland Field, CA. There they picked up brand new B-17Es. Capt. "**HOOT**" **GIBSON** was the squadron C.O. They flew to Hickham Field, HI, on May 27, 1942. They were supposed to head on to Australia but were detained as it was felt that the crews might be needed in Hawaii.

As Hickham began to get crowded, they moved to a strip on the north side of Kualoa [Kauai?]. There they lived in grass huts, swam with the large green turtles and paddled in small boats. "We were living a life of leisure like tourists until on June 3, 1942, [when] we got a frantic call to fly to Midway immediately for combat. We stopped at a Navy Base, Barking Sands, on Niihau Island to fuel up; then on to Midway."

Upon landing at Midway, they found the tiny island was a beehive of activity. **FRED**'s attention was on 4 medium bombers - Martin B-26 Marauders. Each had been jury-rigged to carry torpedoes

outside the bomb bays that were too small for the torpedoes. He also noticed a few old Buffalo Brewster fighters and some brand new Grumman TBF torpedo bombers that could carry their torpedoes in the bomb bays.

Expecting a Japanese air raid the next morning at daybreak, the crews took off before that hour and headed to Kure Island. There they assembled under the command of Lt. Col. Sweeney. Fred writes that he thinks they were first to make a strike but they were certainly green at this. At 20,000 feet they made a run on the carrier Akaga which had little trouble avoiding those 500# bombs. It was only later that Fred found out that this carrier had been converted from a cruiser. That explains why it could sail at 30 knots.

Arriving back in Midway they found the island a mess. The fuel storage tank was burning fiercely and billowing black smoke. The barracks were destroyed along with the latrines except for one commode that FRED found useful at the time only to hear the air raid sirens screaming again. He rushed to his plane leaving his .45 caliber Colt pistol behind. He found the crew fueling the plane using hand pumps to transfer the fuel from 60-gallon drums. These had been buried previously, as a precaution just in case of an emergency such as they were experiencing. The need to get airborne was great, so they took off downwind in a light wind. With a light load this worked fine except no one notified the gooney birds that they would be taking off in the wrong direction. The birds had learned to stay at the downwind end of the runway. The anti-aircraft batteries were firing away. Unfortunately the plane hit an albatross which shattered the Plexiglas nose and hit the bombardier in the chest. The bombardier thought that the enemy had gotten him and cried out, "They got me!" There was blood all over him, but a closer look revealed bird feathers and guts on the bombardier - but not his own guts. On finding this he exclaimed, "It's a damn bird!"

The pilot, P. I. WILLIAMS, used the inter-phone to ask FRED for a heading to the nearest alternate landing sight. It was about 1,200 miles. To the relief of the entire crew came word that the alarm was a false one. It was caused by a couple of Navy F4F fighters from the carrier Hornet that had come in for a landing, as they were low on fuel. The B-17 circled around and landed in the normal upwind direction.

The Navy fighters had to land in a shallow lagoon between the sand isle with the airstrip and the East isle, as the runway was not clear when they attempted to land. They landed safely and walked in the shallow water to the shore. FRED recognized one of the pilots as Lt. Moe Voss with whom he had been stationed at Pensacola when FRED was in the Navy. The pilot said, "Cooke, what in the hell are you doing here?" FRED replied, "Lt. Voss, what in the hell are you doing here?" The two men met in a hearty embrace and had a happy reunion.

Like WESCHE who went from Midway to Mareeba and joined the 30th Squadron, COOKE also went to Mareeba to join the 28th Squadron. Both squadrons were in the 19th BG. When the 19th returned to the States, FRED W. was sent to the 64th Sqd. of the 43rd BG while FRED C. went to the 65th. The 43rd was stationed at Port Moresby at the time. Both FREDs, while on leave in Sydney, met the Australian women they were to marry. Both men flew about the same number of missions, stayed in the service and rose to the rank of Lt. Colonel. Both are still married to their Aussie wives. FRED C. asks, "How much better can life get?" FRED C. wrote that PAULA reminded him that both men had the same first names

M. L. "SHAD" SHADDOX, 64th Pilot from Friendswood, TX, recently underwent surgery to repair a 19-year old colostomy performed when he underwent surgery for a malignant colon cancer. SHAD thinks that is pretty good mileage! This event was instrumental in causing SHAD and his good wife, NAOMI, to launch a crusade regarding cancer. The editor thought that it was worth putting into this Newsletter.

Many of you folks know my wife, Naomi, my bride of 54 years, and me, M. L. "Shad" Shaddox of the 64th. Please excuse me for breaking in and taking a little space in the newsletter. Naomi and I have a short message that we hope you will listen to.

Last April 10th, Naomi suffered a heart attack. She had open-heart surgery, triple by pass, on April 14th. The surgery was successful, but before she fully recovered from that she was found to have a growth on her colon and was subsequently operated on for colon cancer. Now she is in the process of recovering from the cancer surgery.

It is this cancer surgery that this little crusade is about. We just found out that the growth was removed soon enough that, apparently, there were no cancer cells in the lymph glands, so that is, indeed, good news.

There are many types of cancers, some more dangerous than colon cancer, but they are ALL dangerous. Naomi and I are speaking from the colon cancer platform because that is what we are both intimately familiar with. A book in front of me at the moment says that the survival rate for colon cancer victims is 74% for a five-year period. I offer myself as proof that a person can do better than that. I was operated on for colon cancer 19 years ago, and I am still kicking.

What Naomi and I are crusading for is to urge you, or, indeed, to BEG you to get regular checkups for this condition. And we are speaking both to our regular members and to our young Associate Members.

CHARLES PARKER, 63rd Crew Chief, reports a change of address for the Roster. His name was somehow omitted in the 2000 edition. He says that he was crew chief for **KENT ZIMMERMAN**, 63rd Pilot from San Antonio, TX. He and his wife, **BEULAH**, enjoyed the reunion where he got to see some old time friends and meet some new ones.

His new address is **330 Walnut St., Marion, NC 28752**.

Not in the best of health and being 80 years young, **VINCENT C. STOPCZYNSKI**, Headquarters Clerk from Kingston, NY, writes that he is no longer able to attend the reunions. In the past couple of years our immediate past president, **SAMUEL F. COMMONS** 65th Flight Engineer from Flourtown, PA, would get him a reunion cap. VINCE wanted to know how to go about getting a cap for the 2000 reunion. He has been referred to our fine treasurer and CEO for our 43rd Store at the reunions, **WILLIAM H. "BILL" WILSON, Jr.** 65th Pilot from Snyder, TX. Hopefully BILL will have some left over to sell after the reunion.

In a later letter Linda Stopczynski Kolano writing for her father, VINCENT, says that her Dad received his San Antonio reunion cap through the mail from BILL WILSON and is very happy to have done so.

VINCENT appreciates BILL's kindness in making an Old Air Force buddy proud of the 43rd.

We have a number of new members in the Association since the last accounting.

DAVE ARMSTRONG became an Associate member late in July. He states that he is just a huge admirer of the ladies and gentlemen of the WWII generation and their sacrifices. Vital information for your Roster: **P.O. Box 5711, Shasta Lake, CA 96089**; phone – **530-275-3658**. DAVE also has an e-mail address – **<SS396DA@Hotmail.com>**.

ALLAN M BRENNAN, is now an Associate member. ALLAN is the son of a former 63rd Member. He is a pilot by profession and his spouse's name is **JACQUALYN**. Here is more information for your 2000 Rosters. Address – **29 Powhatatan Way, Hackettstown, NJ 07840** and phone number – **908-979-0330**.

Also joining our ever-increasing ranks of Associate members is **KATHY COSTELLO** the niece of the late **DANIEL M. COSTELLO** who was KIA while serving in the 64th. An article concerning KATHY appears earlier in this Newsletter.

Also joining as new members is **FRANCIS "FRANK" J. DRAB**, 403rd Armorer/Waist Gunner. FRANK has sent along a packet of materials that includes many photos taken in New Guinea, Nadzab, Luzon and Ie Shima along with some stories that will be related next. Vital data for your 2000 Roster are his wife's name, **MARGUERITE**. His address and phone number are **995 Devon Rd., Venice, FL 34293-5626** and **941-497-7044**.

FRANK mailed BILL his dues for a couple of years. He says that he is so glad that he located our association after so many years. He does regret not being able to make the San Antonio reunion, but sure plans on making it to Nashville in 2001.

He says that he was an Aerial Gunner Instructor at Tyndall Florida when his best friend's B-24 was shot up badly while he was on his last mission over Europe. Upon making it back to England, the plane crashed killing the entire crew. FRANK immediately volunteered for overseas duty. He was sent to Nadzab, N.G. as an Aerial Gunnery Instructor. He remained a short time at this duty when he began to "raise hell" and was sent to the 43rd at Clark Field in April 1945 and joined a B-24 crew. He became right waist gunner on the crew of Lt. **ART HUMPHREY**. FRANK says that ART was "the best pilot ever." He was with the 43rd until December 10, 1945.

Presently, he belongs to a local Senior Friendship group. The members are writing their life histories for their grandchildren. He encloses a story that follows.

Frank enclosed copies of some 65 photos taken while he served in the 403rd. Some of these were the official photos released of the Japanese landing on Ie Shima in the process of surrendering and being transported on to Manila in a couple of C-54 Skymasters. There are photos of various camp sites of the 43rd, many of 43rd B-24 nose art, of natives in New Guinea and the one peak on Ie Shima and other photos. The editor will scan these as time permits send copies to our Sweetheart of the 43rd, **E. TRACY TUCCIARONE** web mistress from Indianapolis, IN, to appear on our 43rd web site. Also included is a very large color photo of the 403rd's insignia patch entitled "MAREEBA BUTCHERS," a name given to the squadron by Tokyo Rose. His story follows.

Victory over Japan Sept. 2, 1945 or VJ Day

Oh, I definitely remember where I was on VJ Day, but my experiences preceding it make VJ Day almost anticlimactic.

I was only 350 miles from the nearest Japanese coast on Ie Shima. Ie Shima is a small island in the Ryuku chain 5 ½ miles long by 3 miles wide, occupied by 30,000 American soldiers and 8,000 air planes, plus trucks, jeeps, etc. Okinawa and the rest of the Ryuku chain was the first Japanese territory captured by the U.S. It was a brutal fight and the loss [on] both sides was tremendous. More than 100,000 Japanese were killed and 12,000 Americans lost their lives. The Japanese had vowed never to surrender and would gladly give up their lives before the shame of surrender.

The date for the invasion of the mainland of Japan had already been set for Nov. 1st, 1945 – just a few short months away.

In July our outfit of B-24 bombers of the Fifth Air Force 43rd Bomb Group moved up to Ie Shima. The Island was a pile of rubble, not a building or even a wall was left standing. It was on this island that the respected and well-known war Correspondent Ernie Pyle was killed. He was the enlisted men's friend and wrote his stories from their point of view.

The accommodations here were very poor. Our six-man tent was pitched on what remained of a Japanese vegetable garden. The excitement of the buildup kept our minds off the primitive housing. We quickly started flying Bombing missions on mainland Japanese Industrial areas and harbors. Between Bombing Missions, souvenir hunting, and building up the squadron area we were kept almost too busy to gripe.

Shortages of everything were exasperating. On one particular mission [on] July 28th our squadron of 15 planes was scheduled to bomb Kure Harbor, the main Japanese Naval Base. In this harbor were an aircraft carrier, a battleship and several destroyers. Only five of our planes got off the runway due to shortages. Three other planes had to turn back because of malfunctions.

That left two planes, the lead plane and our plane piloted by Lt. Art Humphrey and his nine-man crew. About two hours before target, I as waist gunner/armorer squeezed into the bomb bay to arm the four 2000 lb. bombs, check the release shackles and pull the safety pins. Just before we got to the target all hell broke loose. We estimated 1000 bursts of flack at one time.

We joyfully saw our four bombs explode on the carrier. The next day we were told that the 39,000-ton carrier was lying over on its side.

Aug. 1st. Nagasaki was our target. Just as the Bombardier released the bombs, the plane was hit by a flack burst in the nose, smashing the Bombardier's arm and shoulder. I never saw Lt. Sondergrath again. As soon as we returned, he was quickly removed and rushed to a hospital and then back to the States.

Aug. 7th. Our target was Hiroshima. When the target came into sight, we could see that most of the city was wiped out and fires were still raging. We speculated that the U.S. Navy had just mounted another of its 1,000 plane firebomb raids.

It was not until the next day that we heard about the Atom Bomb.

During all of this the Japs were bombing us nightly. They did not do too much damage, but one night they damaged 14 of our P-51 fighters.

Aug. 10, 9:30 P.M. hearing a loud commotion from the Mess Tent we rushed to hear that the Japanese had asked to surrender. Back to our tent to finish off a quart and a half specially saved for this occasion. Shortly the air raid sirens went off but nothing was dropped.

We flew several missions after this under instructions to bomb only if fired upon or attacked by fighters. We dropped lots of bombs in the ocean.

Aug. 20, 1945 as throngs [of] soldiers lined the runway of Ie Shima, we saw two large Japanese Bombers painted white with very large green crosses on them. They were being escorted by two U.S. Air Force B-25 bombers and two P-51 fighters. These Japanese bombers carried 16 Japanese officials who were empowered to make arrangements for the formal surrender of Japan. After unloading they were quickly escorted into an Air Force C-54 and rushed off to Manila to arrange final plans.

The attitude of thousands of G.I.s standing in utter silence and watching almost in disbelief that here was the final end. Perhaps we were all thanking God quietly that we would live to go home, rather than perhaps be slaughtered in an invasion.

There is a very good chance that I am among many thousands of American boys as well as many, many Japanese whose lives were spared because the Atom Bombs put an end to the dreadful war.

Another new member of our association is **OSCAR MARSHALL COLLINS**, 65th Pilot. Vital data are his address – **1513 Duke Dr., Bakersfield, CA 93305** and phone number – **661-871-7947**. OSCAR completed 50 missions while in the 43rd.

OSCAR writes that the 65th was the first squadron to land B-24s on Tacloban Strip on Leyte, Philippines, on Nov. 24, 1944. After bombing the Japanese troops on Leyte they returned to Owi Island from Tacloban. The Japs strafed them as they were taking off for Owi. The B-24 crew was one of those from the 43rd that were soon after assigned to the 90th BG and stayed with them until the 43rd completed its move to Leyte via ships. He has an interesting story to relate while being attached temporarily to the 90th.

This story about these crews is taken from *STARS AND STRIPES*, but no date is given. It is entitled **FEUDS AND LUCK**.

War's End. We remember very well one of the most dangerous places we have ever seen. It was a narrow strip of good road in a not-too-far forward base in New Guinea. It led to various places but the dangerous stretch was between two camps – the Jolly Rogers and the Ken's Men, two heavy bomb units of the Fifth Air Force.

The road was sometimes called No Man's Land and indeed it was. Great B-24s would sometimes swoop down and pamphlet-bomb one or the other of the two camps that flanked the road-sides. Or men with terrible looks would come swarming across the pike bent on destruction on the sign across the way. Altogether the Jolly Rogers and the Ken's Men hated each other as cordially as they could. It developed into one of the best feuds this side of the Kentucky hills.

Then somebody spoiled it. An order came down from higher headquarters assigning a lot of Ken's Men flying crews to the Jolly Rogers. The feud ended quicker than sharing a bottle of American whisky.

Sgt. Charles Pearson of *YANK* has been interested in this feud for months. So when the whole thing was over, he toured around questioning the boys on their reactions. Following are some interesting observations.

A waist gunner Sgt. Frederick Kores, a Ken's Man from Chicago, said, "At first we thought it was some super-slick scheme on their part. We were on the lookout."

Radio operator Sgt. Richard M. Jardine of Forest Hills, N.Y., was as skeptical. "I thought I might be electrocuted as soon as I touched their radio equipment."

A nose gunner, S/Sgt. Francis J. Weber of Arcadia, Wis., added, "It was just like being sent into the lion's cage. My only thought was 'I'm glad I have insurance'."

The Rogers were as equally undelighted about the whole thing, as the conversations following bear out.

Waist gunner S/Sgt. Leo H. Jova of Manhasset, N.Y., said, "I hated to see them crawl into one of our nice big beautiful airplanes. For all we knew they had planned to sell it to the Japs."

"If they'd have left formation and bombed our headquarters," engineer T/Sgt. Walter M. James of Akron, Ohio, said, "I wouldn't have been surprised."

"It was awful," S/Sgt. Bill M. Wasson of Wichita, Kans., said. "It was the same feeling as flying wing to wing with a bunch of Mitsubishis."

The whole thing had rather a pleasant ending. They're both still out to see who can lay 'em on the target the most. They've gotten used to the rude shock of discovering the guys in the other outfit have families and customarily wore shoes at home. In fact, they're almost all willing to admit now that the feud ended better than if they shot each other into Kingdom Come.

OSCAR included with his application and dues for membership a number of photos that have been scanned from old photos. Most are of rather poor quality. Included are photos of nose art from *BOB'S HOPE*, *THE MAD RUSSIAN*, *PUNJA KASI*, *BARBARA JEAN*, *COCKTAIL HOUR* and *OUTA THIS WORLD*. Also there is a photo of the 65th Squadron sign on Owi, one of a volleyball game in progress at Clark Field and a photo of a 65th B-24 crew standing before the tail of a Jolly Roger's B-24 with the skull and crossbones prominently displayed. This crew was one of those assigned temporarily to the 90th BG. The names of the 10 men on the crew are:

JOHN RADTKE, OSCAR COLLINS (Copilot), LOUIS GREENSPAN, BLAINE YOUNG, AL RUES, DICK JARDIN, FRANCIS WEBER, AL RUNGE, FRED KORES and AL ROELLE.

PHYLLIS JOHNSON of Kettle River, MN, and widow of the late **HAROLD C. JOHNSON**, 403rd Crew Chief, mailed **BILL** her 2001 dues. She wants to thank all of those who get the Newsletter to the members and those who arrange the reunions. She missed the last two the reunions in Tucson and San Antonio but hopes to make it to Nashville. She looks forward to receiving the " '43rd History Book' soon."

ANNE A. LaMORGE of Vacaville, CA, and widow of the late **VINCENT La MORGE** of the 64th, has paid her dues for the next three years. She missed the Tucson reunion while undergoing radiation treatments and under doctor's orders not to travel. She also missed the San Antonio reunion due to doctor's advice not to travel.

She had a phone call from **GUS DRUMM**, 64th Ordinance from Merced, CA, a month before the San Antonio reunion. At that time she was planning on attending and told him so. They had a "wonderful conversation." GUS had not yet learned to use his computer, but he promised her that he would try e-mail. GUS reported that he and **BUNNY** were doing O.K. ANNE hopes to see him the next time he travels to Travis Air Force Base.

ANNE says that she hears on occasion from **SHAD SHADDOX**, 64th Pilot from Friendswood, TX, and from **ROBERT A. CLAYCOMBE**, 65th Pilot from Meridian, IN. She would love to hear from **JOE Di MAURO**, 64th Nose Gunner from Cherry Hill, NJ.

ANNE is still able to do her volunteer work at her church one day a week distributing food to the needy in the community. She is also a member of the Board of the Vacaville Community Welfare Association. She had to stop her volunteer work at the Travis AF Base. She had been doing that since 1982 and hopes to resume that work soon. She hopes to work in the museum on the base. There is a 5th A. F. display there. She often wears her 5th AF pin she purchased at Omaha. People often stop to tell her that they served in the 5th, but their service has always been during the Korean or Vietnam era.

VINCE served all of his war time service in the 5th. In peacetime he served in the 8th A. F. at Bentwater, Woodbridge RAF stations in England. He retired after 26 years of service.

ANNE says that Web TV has spoiled her. She gets e-mail nearly every day and also logs on to the URL, www.FEEDTHEHUNGER. She can click on and make a donation paid for by the Feinstein Foundation.

She sends her best to all in the Association. Her e-mail address is <annelam@WebTV.net>.

TED J. BIBY, 403rd Photo Lab, brought his dues up to date and beyond with a check to **BILL**. Along with his check he sent a list of 403rd men who had passed away since the 1999 reunion of the 403rd in Aurora, NE. That squadron holds an annual reunion in Aurora. This year it was on Sept. 8-10. **PHYLISS CHRISTIANSEN**, widow of **LES**, who lives in Hampton, NE, serves as the secretary to the men from the 403rd. The men **TED** had named have all been listed in one of our 2000 Newsletters.

TED also enclosed some humor. Some of this appears in our Quarterly Humor feature. He writes that the staff is doing a great job with the Newsletter.

Also paying his dues for 2001 and making a contribution to the Association is **CLINTON M. LOCKAMY**, 64th Navigator from Houston, TX. He thanks **BILL** and the many others who keep the Association running.

He and his wife, **MARIAN**, regret missing the San Antonio reunion, but with health problems entering the picture, they stay close to home.

Catching up with past dues and into the first year of the new century, 2001, is **DAVID W. HASSEMER**, Headquarters Pilot from San Antonio, TX. **DAVE** has sent along a new address. They are still living in the Air Force Village One, but they have switched apartments. So record the new address in your 2000 Rosters: **4917 Ravenswood Dr. #105, San Antonio, TX 78227-4388**.

DAVE writes that he and **PHYLLIS** are not able to do much, so the reunion was out of the question.

JOHN L. VAN AUKEN, 65th Squadron, has paid his 2001 dues and writes that due to bad health he was not able to make it to San Antonio this year. He says that he lives only about 4 hours from Nashville, so he hopes to make it there next year. He thinks that the Grand Old Opry would be the best. All we need then is for "...George Jones to sing for us."

The editor finds that **JOHN** is not listed in the 2000 Directory so here is his address: **P.O. Box 734, Taylorsville, IN 47280-0734**.

ELWYN, a check by our 43rd Elf, ELAIN, shows that your name is on our mailing list with the correct address. You should have received the July Newsletter, but another copy will be mailed to you shortly. We are sorry about the problem and are still wondering how this happened.

LEWIS H. DAWS, 65th Aircraft Maintenance from Rialto, CA, sent the editor some material via e-mail. He noticed in the July Newsletter that when Owi was mentioned, there was a reference to the food in the mess hall. LEW says that had the men been able to eat in the officers' mess hall, maybe the food was better. At the time they were preparing for the invasion of the Philippines so they were short on rations and he found out that the cooks were making booze with the dried fruit that was supposed to have been served. Some of his buddies made friends with the Sea Bees working on the island and were able to get a good meal with the Navy now and then. He also recalls that there was a shortage of clothing and the men had to draw such from the Navy.

Shortly before his rotation back to the States, he was sent to an island under the command of the 13th AAF. The 43rd had a B-24 there and he was to "baby sit" it until it could be moved back to Owi. While there he had Spam to eat in the mess hall and he found it "... certainly tasted good." He recalls that many men complained about Spam.

RICHARD J. MROWSKI, 403rd Gunner from West Allis, WI, sent a copy of an article from the August 2000 issue of *Military* by Trooper Henry Grim, 112th Cavalry Regiment. He thought that this might be of interest to many of our readers, as he believes that the 43rd participated in this action. It follows.

Events in New Britain

We arrived in Arawe, New Britain, on 15 Dec 1943 and completed approximately 200 air raids bombing and strafing. Out last air raid on Arawe was on 21 Feb 1944.

The largest air raid came the first day of the landing – 230 Japanese planes, two engine bombers, zeros and dive-bombers. On 25 Dec the Japanese counter-attacked our main line of resistance at about 2300 hours.

I remember being on the beach the first day of the landing when Gen. MacArthur's plane flew over very low and dropped boxes of cigars for the troops – RoiTans; I got two cigars.

On 16 Jan our Liberators dropped bombs on the Japanese line that was dug in about 1,000 yards above our own line. After the bombs, our artillery opened up and then came our 81mm mortars. After the mortar fire stopped, our light tanks went forward, followed by the 158th Infantry Regiment. Our casualties were high that day, but the Japanese casualties were higher; an estimated 200 were killed. The remainder of them retreated and took to the jungles. They were in bad shape for food and supplies. Our Navy cut off New Ireland and New Britain and our Air Force was constantly bombing Rabaul.

On 1 Feb a Japanese dive-bomber came in between the radar. Our 40mm gun crews made it plenty hot for him. He dropped his bomb 30 yards from our kitchen – right after we had gone through the chow line. The bomb was a 550-pound daisy cutter, six feet long. There was not time to run for foxholes; three men were killed, two were less than five feet from me.

Our PT boats and patrol planes knocked out all of the Japanese barge traffic in the New Britain area. On 2 Feb our troops made a drive to the Pulie River. It was discovered that the Japanese had left, probably to Gasmata and then on to Rabaul.

E-mail from ROBERT W. WHITE, 65th Tail Gunner from W. Peabody, MA, refers to the inquiry by JOSEPH R. ESPOSITO, 65th Navigator from Malverne, NY, on page 19 of the July 2000 Newsletter. JOSEPH had inquired about the B-24 *LUCKY LUCILLE*. The editor had surmised that the *LUCKY LUCILLE* in which BOB had flown was a B-17, but BOB informs the editor that it was a B-24 and that he was on one of the first B-24 crews joining the 65th Squadron. They

were replacing the B-17 crews at that time. Apparently both men flew in the same B-24 but many months apart.

In the Jan. 2000 Newsletter, page 4, there appeared an article regarding a 43rd plane lost with 5 men aboard on Mar. 9, 1945, while flying from Clark Field to Tacloban, and the eventual finding of the plane and the interment of crew's remains at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, MO.

The source of the article was a Chuck Snyder who used the letters "EZ" in his e-mail address. Our own **CHARLES "CHUCK" RAUCH**, 63rd Navigator from Punta Gorda, FL, contacted Snyder to see if there was some relationship between Chuck Snyder and the radio operator, **EDWIN Z. "EZ" SNYDER** from Granbury, TX, on the same crew with **CHUCK RAUCH**. There was no relationship. Chuck "EZ" Snyder simply chose those letters as he had recently retired to EZ living. But he did send **CHUCK RAUCH** a copy of a memorial he wrote to the pilot of that B-24, **PAUL WITTENBERGER**, for their local paper after getting some help from a Joe Snyder. [Could that have been our **JOSEPH W. SNYDER**, 403rd Gunner from Greencastle, PA? Both were in the 403rd and flew together.]

Here are excerpts from that memorial:

Paul Wittenberger was born on Oct. 12, 1918 in Wessington, SD, where he graduated as valedictorian of his high school class in 1936. He then moved in time to ND. He enlisted in the Army air Corps in early 1943 and began his service at Jefferson Barracks, MO. After flight training, he graduated from Ft. Sumpter, NM, as a 2nd Lt. with his pilot's wings. He was generally called Witt.

He and his crew were sent to the South Pacific in Oct. 1944 where they were assigned to the 43rd BG 403rd Sqd. of the 5th AAF. The crew flew its first combat mission on Nov. 5, 1944. They moved to Tacloban, Leyte Island. His last mission was his 13th. It was a "maximum effort" raid against the Island Fortress of Corregidor.

As the 43rd was in the process of moving north to Clark Field, **PAUL** flew a ferrying mission from Tacloban to Clark Field under poor flying conditions on March 9, 1945. On the return flight **PAUL** and the other 4 men aboard the B-24 disappeared. He was promoted to 1st Lt. posthumously. In 1949, the War Dept. notified his parents that it was improbable that his remains would ever be recovered.

His parents then had a stone memorial placed on the family plot in the Wessington Cemetery. After the 1952 discovery of the plane on Leyte along with the remains of the 5 men, whose individual identification was impossible to make, they were all interred communally at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, MO. The other men aboard that ill-fated B-24 were Lt. Clarence Miller, Lt. Willis Bundy, Sgt. Sarafin Urbanski and Sgt. Dole Swonger.

EDITORIAL

If you are like many of us, you are rather sick and tired of hearing from the revisionists who keep crying that the U.S. did not need to drop the atomic bombs on Japan as they were about to surrender anyway. Some of you who were on Ie Shima at the end of the war must remember how so many of our crews were practicing flying 10 fully equipped infantrymen in our B-24s. We were preparing for a landing with that number per plane once Japan was invaded and an airstrip was secured.

Like us, the former coach of the Buffalo Bills NFL football team, Marv Levy, wrote the following which appeared in the *Buffalo News* on Wednesday, August 16, 2000. It is an eloquent treatise done by a man who majored in English and English literature through a masters degree on the GI Bill of Rights.

In an article that appeared in The News on Aug. 6, two university graduate students, Uday Mohan and Leo Maley III, lament that "most reporters and commentators who write about Hiroshima and Nagasaki uncritically support the popular assumption that the use of the atomic bombs was absolutely necessary to end the war and save American lives."

Mohan and Maley contend that such "uncritical acceptance of mass violence threatens to render us unable to confront one of the most disturbing episodes in our nation's past."

With ruffled feathers showing, Mohan and Maley pout that "many journalists" also proclaim the widely held but mistaken notion that only untrustworthy 'revisionists' have criticized the atomic bombings.

Implication: How dare those "many journalists" refer to the two of us – we who "research and write about Hiroshima and American culture" – with such disdain.

Mohan and Maley assert that our dropping the atomic bomb was an immoral and unnecessary act. In support of this judgment, they quote several respected journalists from the World War II era. According to Mohan and Maley, some of those journalists had written that Japan was ready to surrender anyway, especially if we had not adopted a doctrine that called for unconditional surrender.

As I recall, Japan was not ready to surrender after we crippled its fleet at Midway; nor was it ready to surrender after my neighbor Bob Bailey, was killed at Guadalcanal.

I was not ready to surrender after my classmate, Jerry "Left" Brodski, lost his right arm at Tarawa. It was not ready to surrender when my friend, Larry McCarthy, was wounded on Iwo Jima or when another friend, Dudley Simpson, suffered shrapnel wounds on Okinawa that required him to have a steel plate in his head.

Ask all of those fellows if they wished the bomb had been dropped sooner. Ask the families of those who didn't come home.

The Japanese soldiers were fanatical fighters. The toll inflicted on their enemy and upon themselves in battle was horrific. They would fight to the death and all of Japan was totally prepared to do the same so long as the faintest lack of resolve on the part of their enemy might be perceived.

If those journalistic sources cited by Mohan and Maley were so insightful in knowing that Japan was about to surrender, I still would like the answer to this question: Why didn't Japan seek peace after the first bomb was dropped?

Unquestionably it is a great tragedy that there was ever a necessity to use such a weapon of mass destruction. Withholding use of it, however, would have meant at least another million American casualties in an invasion of the Japanese homeland. It probably meant an even greater number of Japanese military and civilian casualties.

It meant as well no absolute assurance of victory. Pardon the metaphor, but we weren't playing for a tie so that the war could go into overtime.

Could we even be certain that Japan itself, given the time, would not be developing its own atomic weapon?

Did Mohan and Maley research who started the war? Did they research that our enemy had allied itself with Nazi Germany, the most malignant tyranny the world has ever known? Did they research the Rape of Nanking, where the Japanese regime had slaughtered 350,000 Chinese civilians?

Did they research that by dropping the bomb we ended the carnage and helped to preserve the type of government that allows them to express freely their own misguided – and yes, revisionist – opinions?

The day after I graduated from high school in 1943 I enlisted, along with 21 of my classmates, in the Army Air Corps. Eighteen of us returned home after the war. The other four never saw their 21st birthdays.

Rather than going into service, all of us would have preferred entering college and writing scholarly treatises on how the United States had overreacted by declaring war on Spain following the sinking of our battleship Maine in 1898.

We couldn't do that in 1943, but because of the atom bomb, millions of young Americans who might not otherwise have made it came home to a free world in 1946.

[Well done, Marv! A point he did not make was that many of those journalists who said it was not necessary to drop the A-bombs, did so many years after the war ended when they thought that new evidence had been found to show that Japan was ready to surrender. No one has ever produced that evidence so far as this editor knows.]
.....

HOWARD BOOTH, 63rd Pilot from Fairfield, CA, has a new e-mail address. It is now
<Budbooth@earthlink.net>.

The editor received a nice letter from **INGRID** and **CHARLIE FARHA**, Intelligence from Headquarters and from Rockledge, FL. They regretted not being able to come to the 2000 reunion. He has worn out the cartilage in both knees and the doctor wants him to have both replaced. He is holding off and tolerating the pain, as he does not want to be bedridden for any period of time.

He has been enjoying the newsletters. It helps him keep up with what takes place in the association.

CHARLIE writes that the mention of **MITCH COBEAGA**, 403rd Pilot, in the diary of **DAVE ADAMS**, Copilot on **MITCH**'s crew and from Bellevue, NE, brought back lots of memories. **CHARLIE** served with **MITCH** in Townsville when he was transferred from the squadron to the Depot where he test flew aircraft that were being readied to return to the squadrons for duty.

The Group CO at the time **CHARLIE** was in New Guinea was Col. **HARRY HAWTHORNE**. The Col. sent him to New Guinea on a purchasing trip to buy spirits and beer for the clubs being built in the Group. Previously, while there, he met a fellow who was on R&R and who was a friend of the Chairman of the Spirit Board in Sydney. When he found out that **CHARLIE** was there to purchase such items to take back to the Group, he informed **CHARLIE** that should he ever need the fellow's help, to just call on him and he would do all he could to make such an endeavor successful. Upon returning to the Group and informing the intelligence officer of this meeting, he in turn told the Col. who told **CHARLIE** that when they needed a supply of spirits and beer, he would send **CHARLIE** to purchase such.

Each squadron in turn appointed one man to assist **CHARLIE**. They were very successful in purchasing the spirits, beer and Coca-Cola. These supplies had to be placed in bond when purchased. **CHARLIE** would then get in contact with Group Headquarters in New Guinea, which in turn sent an aircraft to load the supplies and take them to the Group. He writes that he has photos of the headquarters club and bar showing Col. **HAWTHORNE** and other personnel "...enjoying the goodies." These are dated 20 October 1943.

CHARLIE says that he has come across a few photos of nose art and that should anyone want copies of these, he would be pleased to comply with such a request. He has photos of B-17 *THE JERSEY SKEETER*. The B-24s include *MABEL'S LABELS*, *IT AIN'T SO FUNNY*, *LAST HORIZON*, *RUM AND COKE*, *COCKTAIL HOUR*, *MILLION DOLLAR BABY*, *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*, and a B-24 #430 airborne with the diagonal stripes. In addition he has an 8x10 photo with aircraft from the 4 squadrons flying in formation. Over the years some of these photos have faded.

He reports a new area code so his new phone number is **321-631-1939**.

CHARLIE enclosed excerpts from a poem by Thomas Gray (1716-1771) that is very fitting to go along with the Memorial Message by our Chaplain **ROLAND T. FISHER**, 63rd Pilot from Lake Oswego, OR. *ELEGY IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD* may be the most quoted poem in English, at least until the 20th century, in which Gray reminisces on his childhood. He may have been writing from a churchyard in Stoke Poges in 1742 from which he could see the spires of Eton College where he and those whom he is elegizing attended school and became life long friends. In particular he was grieving the recent loss of Richard West, and the temporary estrangement from two other friends, Thomas Ash-ton and Horace Walpole.

Alas, regardless of their doom
The little victims play!
No sense have they of ills to come,

No care beyond to-day.
(Lines 51-54)

...
Yet ah! Why should they know their fate?
Since sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies.
Thought would destroy their paradise.
No more; where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise.
(Lines 95-100)

CHARLIE closes with an old Irish curse:

May those that love us, love us
and those that don't love us,
May God turn their hearts,
and if He can't turn their hearts,
May he turn their ankles,
so we'll know them by their limping.

EDWARD L. GAMMILL, 63rd Crew/Flight Chief from Phoenix, AZ, has volunteered to serve as our recruitment person. So if you know anyone who was in the 43rd and is not currently a member of our association, let ED know about them. His address was accidentally omitted from the 2000 Roster. It is **5415E. Osborn Rd. Phoenix, AZ 85018-6106. Phone – 602-840-7473.**

E-mail <Edgammill@aol.com>.

Shortly after the editor returned from the reunion this year, he received a phone call from **S. L. FLINNER**, 63rd Pilot from Prospect, PA. He just wanted to chat about the reunion since he was unable to attend and wanted to know what took place. The editor encouraged him to seriously consider attending the 2001 reunion in Nashville and the 2002 reunion in Las Vegas.

LEWIS B. WHITWORTH, 64th Flight Engineer, is back at his winter home. The address is **10492 S.E. 179th Place, Summerville, FL 34491-7539.** He reports that he had a note from **LARRY HICKEY** telling him that the book will be well worth the wait. He is enjoying the Newsletter.

E-mail reached the editor in a very indirect route and too late to make the July Newsletter. Paul Murphy wrote on behalf of Kerry, Deborah and Jack Sweeney to report the passing of **JOHN E. "BUD" SWEENEY**, 64th Radio Operator/Gunner from Centerville, MA, on April 14, 2000. BUD served in the 64th from 8/31/42 – 7/20/45. BUD also served in Korea

His daughter Kerry's address is **86 Chuckles Way, Marstons Mills, MA 02648.**

After a long period of searching, **TOM DOW**, Associate member and nephew of S/Sgt. **ALFRED "ALLIE" DOW**, found his uncle's IDPF. ALLIE was lost when the B-17F #41-24356 was shot down during the Battle of the Bismarck Sea on 3/3/43. Some excerpts from that report are given below:

1 July 1943 from 1st Lt. **HARVEY WILSON**, Air Corps.

2nd Lt. **LOUIS I. MILLER** was the Co-pilot of a B-17 type of airplane that was ordered to participate in an attack on an enemy convoy in the Bismarck Sea near Lae, New Guinea on 3 March 1943. Enroute to the target, they were attacked by innumerable Zeros. One Zero managed to hit the Pilot's compartment. Immediately, flames shot through the ship, spouting from the windows and tail. Six or seven men bailed out. One chute, after opening, forced the fellow out of harness and he went plummeting to his death 7,000 feet below. The other chutes all opened, and as they floated earthward, they were unmercifully strafed by Zeros. After the ship caught fire it nosed

earthward to make its bombing run. The bombs were released as the aircraft went to its doom. Ever on the job – gallant to the end. At 1000 feet the tail wrenched off and floated earthward in weird gyrations. The remaining part of the ship dove into the water. A few moments late it sank beneath the waves. The will and courage to carry on, in the face of grave danger without regard for personal safety, is a tribute of gallantry in action and is worthy of commendation.

I have personal knowledge of the above facts in this case, as I was in A PRATICIPLATING AIRCRAFT, AND WAS AN EYEWITNESS. This airplane was on a single strike mission, and the entire crew have been recommended for award of the Silver Star.

8 February 1944 from Captain **WILLIS E. BRADY**, Air Corps, Army Air Field, Ardmore, Oklahoma, who was also a witness to the crash of the B-17.

The four officers and one man remained in the plane. The bombing run was completed and the pilot pulled the plane up a little out of formation. He gave a salute and a big smile and headed the plane down for the water. The plane was observed to break in two pieces at an altitude of approximately 300 feet. This plane went down in the middle of the Jap convoy. Much strafing was done in this area later and anyone alive could quite possibly have been killed by our own planes.

After further searching TOM found that the American Battle Memorial Commission at abmc.gov shows that three of the officers aboard 24356 (**MOORE, MILLER AND JAMES**) were awarded the Silver Star. There is no record at abmc.gov for 2nd Lt. **WILLIMA R. McMAMY**. The rest of the crew were awarded Air Medals. **ALFRED F. WESTPHALL** was awarded the DFC.

20th REUNION SAN ANTONIO, TX HYATT REGENCY HOTEL AUG. 28th– SEP. 03, 2000

Listed below are those who signed the registration sheets for each squadron. There were several guests who attended the Saturday night dinner/dance who are not listed below.

HEADQUARTERS SQUADRON

JOE & ARLENE GREENWELL

LOU ALPE

63rd SQUADRON

CHUCK & PAT RAUCH
LLOYD ANDERSON
JIM & AUDREY DIEFFENDERFER
JIM & MICKEY MURPHY
RAY & DOROTHY CRAWFORD
ED GAMMILL
KEN & DOROTHY BECKSTROM
GEORGE & AILEEN WHITE
CHARLES & BEULAH PARKER
J. C. CHUNKY & CLARA MARIE WILFERT
DORIS BUTLER
GEORGE SETHER
FRANCIS & PAULINE DENAULT
SCOTT KIRBY & BILLY LEWIS (NEAL KIRBY)
CHARLES & LUCILLE HOFFMAN (GAMMILL)

NEAL & RUDI FUGATE
HERBERT C. & VIVIAN PFLUEGER & BARBARA
MIKE & JO BACHI
ROGER & OLGA VARGAS
JIM & LOUISE THOMPSON
HELEN L. GREEN
RAYMOND & BETTY GATES
FRANCIS & ARLENE LANGLAND
STEVE & MADELINE PERRONE
ROLAND FISHER
BEN & HAZEL FINCHAM
GEORGE & BERTHA BURHOE
TOM DOW & BETH LUCK (for S.SGT. ALFRED DOW)
ALFRED (FRED) HAGEN
WILLIAM "WILLIE" PETTUS (JIM PETTUS' Son)
STEVIE KAPLAN (Guest with Willie Pettus)

64th SQUADRON

BOB COOPER
WENDELL & PEGGY JONES
ED & LILLIAN ROSE
JOSEPH MANTIGLIA
LYLE & BETTY HEINEKE
GARRETT L. & MARY MINNICK
ROBERT L. SCHULTZ
ROY & LOUISE BAILEY
KEN & ROSIE BROWN
EMIL & SHIRLEY LANGE
RALPH & MOZELLE GRUBB
JACK NUNNELLEE
GOERGE & IVY HUNTER
ART CURREN
RUSS & JANE BURNETT
CHARLES & MILDRED McCLENNY
JOE C. & DOLORES COX

Na DEANE FULCOMER
FRED F. & MAUREEN WESCHE
ROGER & AUDREY KETTLESON
FALCNOR & GOLDIE GIFFORD
CLETUS & MARJORIE ANGERMEIER
JANICE OLSON
ARVID & CLARE HOUGLUM
GEORGE WYATT
JOE & HELEN JANCOSKO
HOWARD "ANDY" & ANNE ANDERSON
JOE SHEP CHEPULIS
JUNE PANTHER
ARTHUR & BEVERLEE MULLIGAN
LYLE & MARY GOLDNER
BYRLE & DOLLY MILLER
STEVE BLOUNT
SAM WELBORN

65th SQUADRON

ELDON E. "BUD" LAWSON
ARNOLD & EVELYN HUSKINS and their
GUESTS -ED & ELEANOR JONES
JIM HARCROW
SAM & HELEN COMMONS
MAX & FRAN OSBORN
BILL & NANCY WILSON III
LARRY MAIN
MIKE MAIN (Grandson of Larry)
TOM & CATHERINE THOMAS
FRANCIS R. BONTWELL
JIM EIDE
MARCUS CARRELL
MAX H. MAYER
ALICE C. BARNES

LLOUD "BREZZY" BOREN
BETHEL & BONNIE RAY
JIM & ANITA CHERKAUER
CHALKY & ROSEMARY WHITE
DON & BETTY MARSAGLIA
BILL & MARY LOIS WILSON
DAYT & ANN BLANCHARD
STEVE MAIN (Son of Larry)
BILL & MARY MYLES
DICK & ELLE BENNETT
JUDY MALLEY
HERBERT BRUNE
DAN CARRELL (Guest of Marcus Carrell)
TOM JAMISON
IRENE WATSON

403rd SQUADRON

GEORGE & JEAN ANDERSON
ART & VIRGINIA DURBECK
RANDELL & PATSY HARRIS
BILL & NANCY SOLOMON
WADE T. KEHR
RICHARD WILLIAMS
NEIL & MARLYS FAIRBANKS
LEO & RITA DENAULT
STEVE BRUMM (Son of FRANK D. BRUMM)

MAX & MARGARET AXELSEN
PERCY & JUANITA ALEXANDER
JOE & SALLY SNYDER
ERNEST & PEGGY WELLS
PAUL & CAROLYN COBER
JACK & CLARA GOSSEAU
KAY & ROGER SULLIVAN
GEORGE M. MUNSELLE
VIC BRUMM (Grandson of FRANK D. BRUMM)

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30, 2000

In Attendance and end of term (year):

Max Axelsen, President (2000)
William H. "Bill" Wilson, Jr., Treasurer (2000)

Roger Kettleleson, Vice President (2000)
Jim Cherkauer, Secretary (2000)

& Past President (1988-1991)

Roland Fisher, 63rd Director (2000)

Kenneth Brown, 64th Director (2000)

Elson E. "Bud" Lawson, 65th Director (2002)

Arthur G. "Art" Durbeck, 403rd Director (2000)

Charles "Chuck" Rauch, 63rd Director (2001)

L. C. Chalky White, 65th Director (2001)

Joseph W. "Joe" Snyder, 403rd Director (2002)

George L. White, Past President (1985-1987)

James T. Murphy, Past President (1996-1997)

Max Osborn, Past President (1994-1995)

Samuel F. Commons, Past President (1998-1999)

Bethel Ray 2001 Reunion Coordinator and Host.

Meeting called to order by Pres. Max Axelsen in the Pecan Room of the Hyatt Regency Hotel San Antonio, Texas at 8:03 P.M.

- A. Introduction of BETHEL F. RAY, the host for the 2001 reunion in Nashville, Tennessee.
- B. Max indicated that he had a problem with item L of the minutes of the 1999 Board meeting. As passed by the Board this revision to the bylaws would leave the officers of the Association without authority to expend any funds without the approval of the Board of Directors. He indicated that this would put the President and other officers in an untenable position on urgent matters that might call for the expenditure of funds.
Roland Fisher stated that he would make a motion to correct this matter when the item of New Business came up.
Joe Snyder moved to approve the 1999 Minutes of the Board. The motion was seconded and carried.
- C. Bill Wilson submitted the Treasurer's report that is shown following these minutes.
President Max explained some expenses in the report that he had incurred. He reported that by phone he contacted the members of the Board who approved a \$2,000 donation to the WWII War Memorial Foundation. This was increased by a \$50 donation by Bud Lawson.
He also reported that he sent a flower arrangement to the other officers and Tracy Tucciarone at Easter time from the 43rd Bomb Group Assoc. in recognition of the work they performed for the Association.
A motion to accept the report was made by Jim Cherkauer and seconded by Eldon "Bud" Lawson. It carried.
- D. "Bud" Lawson moved that the officers' signatures be placed on signature cards for the CD account with the Canyon Investment Co. and that it would require the signature of any two officers to withdraw funds from this account.
The motion was seconded by L. C. "Chalky" White and carried.
- E. Max indicated that after reading the Bylaws of the Association he felt as did the Secretary, Jim Cherkauer, that these were a bit out of date. Did we want to revise them or just let them stay as they are?
After discussion and some advice from Max Osborn, Past President and a lawyer by profession, a motion was made by Roland Fisher to let the bylaws stay as written. It was seconded by Roland Fisher and carried.

- F. Pres. Axelsen asked about the status of the Directors of the Board. The names and terms were read by Sect. Cherkauer. (See those in attendance at beginning of minutes.) Not shown at the beginning of these minutes are: Joseph R. Jancosko, 64th Director (2002) and James T. Pettus, Headquarters Director (2001)
- G. Max Axelsen gave a report on the status of the history of the 43rd and Lawrence Hickey the author. Max had been in contact with Ron Nielson, who will be the agent who handles the publishing of this book when it is complete. Ron has been to see Larry and says that the book is near completion. Roland Fisher, who also visited Larry, reported that it was then on 6 jazz disks with two to go. These two may be near completion at this time. Once Ron receives the disks, it will be about 7 weeks before the books are ready for sale and distribution. He believes that he will have the disks in his hands about the 15th of September.
The paper has been purchased for the printing. Sue Hickey, Larry's wife, has retired and is working full time with Larry along with one other assistant.
- H. Max reported that Jim Cherkauer had notified him that he would not continue as secretary and editor of the newsletter after Dec. 31, 2001, assuming he was reelected through 2001. Max alerted the Board that the association was in the process of finding someone to replace him and he was open to any suggestions from members.
Discussion followed but no action was taken.
- I. Max stated that it was time that our association employed professionals to coordinate and arrange our reunions starting in 2002. He has looked into the matter and found the Armed Forces Reunions Inc. have handled many reunions for organizations like ours. They charge a fee of \$5.00 a head for those attending. They seem to be able to get much better terms and rates than we can by working independently. We have no one with the experience that the late Bob Watson had in dealing with hotel managements and others that provided services at our reunion.
After discussion the consensus was that this is the way we should proceed after the Nashville reunion next year.
- J. Bethel Ray reported that matters were proceeding well with the 2001 reunion in Nashville. The reunion still would be held at the Opryland Hotel even though the Radisson chain recently purchased it. He anticipates that the cost of this reunion will be less than the current one. Additional information will be distributed in future newsletters.
- K. Roger Kettleson reported on some information he gathered for a reunion in Las Vegas probably in October 2002. He did get an estimate for room costs for a hotel in downtown Las Vegas. It was for \$42 per night plus an 11% tax.
Jim Cherkauer moved that our 2002 reunion be held in Las Vegas. The motion was seconded by Chalky White and approved by the board.
- L. Max Axelsen reported on the health status of our B-24 era C.O. Jim Pettus. Jim is putting up a strong battle in his fight with a brain tumor. He appreciates cards, letters and e-mail.
Max also expressed our condolences on the death of our late reunion coordinator Bob Watson.
- M. New Business:
a. Roland Fisher moved that the Board authorize the Officers of the Association to expend up to \$1,000 on their own discretion for business of the Association.
Bud Lawson seconded the motion. It carried unanimously.

N. The meeting adjourned at 10:14 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Cherkauer, Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT
43rd Bomb Group Association
01-01-2000 to 08-28-2000

Income

Dues	\$ 3,880.00
Life Member	\$ 1,400.00
Donation	\$ 230.00
Interest	\$ 1,218.00
PX	\$ 23.40
E-mail	\$ -
Total	\$ 6,751.40

Expenses

Printing	\$ 4,690.13
Postage	\$ 1,138.35
PX Supplies	\$ 541.25
Office Supplies	\$ 76.18
Telephone	\$ 107.03
WWII Memorial	\$ 2,050.00
Help & Lease Equipment	\$ 700.00
Gifts	\$ 368.32
San Antonio Reunion	\$ 6,000.00
Total	\$ 15,671.26

Net

01-01-2000 Starting Balance	\$ 27,034.23
08-28-2000 Balance	\$ 18,114.37
San Antonio Advance	\$ 1,500.00
CD Canyon Investment Co	\$ 30,000.00
Net Worth	\$ 49,614.37

Respectfully submitted,
William H. "Bill" Wilson, Jr.
Treasurer

.....

The 20th reunion has come and gone, but it was a tremendous success. Our hosts, MAX and MARGARET AXELSEN, did a masterful task of coordinating everything, attending to our needs, be-

ing gracious hosts and staying sane during the entire week of events. All of us who attended owe them many thanks for a job well done.

MAX reported that we missed a number of our members who had registered, or had planned to attend, but had to cancel due to illness or other family problems. ALVIN HAAS needed a pacemaker. SHAD SHADDOX continues to care for NAOMI who has had extensive heart problems. FRED PETERS (at 86 years young) cancelled due to his health. JAY ZEAMER had additional commitments in Colorado and at a Confederate AF affair. He concluded that he could not make all three events and so cancelled out on the 43rd reunion. NICK ARABINKO cancelled in order to attend to SHIRLEY's needs. We did miss having all of these good people with us and just hope that we will see them at Nashville, TN, next year. Mark your 20001 calendar NOW! We will meet in the great state of Tennessee, at Nashville, October 28-November 4, 2001. Rates will be \$69.00 per night plus 13.25% tax.

Most of the attendees arrived on Wednesday, August 30th. The directors held their annual meeting at 8:00 PM that evening. The annual golf and bridge tournaments were held on Thursday morning and early afternoon. It was a mighty hot day for golf while the bridge was played in the comfortable air-conditioned hospitality room.

Thursday evening the squadron meetings were held. The 63rd Squadron reelected ROLAND T. FISHER as director through 2003, and the 64th Squadron elected STEVE W. BLOUNT III for their director through 2003 and ART DURBECK was reelected as a 403rd Director through 2003.

The ladies and the men attended a delightful talk by John Ingram Walker, M.D. and psychiatrist from Texas. He gave a rather thought provoking talk while keeping the audience relaxed and in laughter.

Many of the attendees took one or more of the tours available: Hittin' The Hill Country, Shopping Tour of San Antonio and the tour of Fort Sam Houston, Steves Homestead and the Institute of Texan Cultures.

Friday was another hot day. After a Continental breakfast at the hotel most of us took the tour buses to Lackland AFB and viewed the graduation parade. For this editor it brought back memories as he stood in many a formation on those same parade grounds in 1943 when it was called the San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center. After a short time to view the many airplanes on exhibit around the parade grounds, the buses took us all to the Kelly AFB where we walked through and examined an immense C-5 cargo plane. How those pilots handle all of the instruments in the cockpit is a mystery to the editor and former B-24 pilot. After that tour, we all viewed F-16s in various stages of readiness and maintenance. This was followed by a delicious lunch at the Kelly AFB Officers Club. Those who did not venture into the sun and heat for the parade and tour met us in the club for lunch.

That evening, we returned to the Kelly Officers Club for a cocktail hour, dinner and fine Country & Western music and dancing which included a lesson in line dancing by a couple of real pros. When the party broke up the last bus back to the hotel was nearly filled to capacity and the riders sang songs on the ride back.

Saturday morning the group had a delicious breakfast buffet in the Rio Grand Ballroom. This was followed by the Group Meeting. A report on the meeting and the minutes for the meeting appear later in this edition.

At 5 P.M. we gathered for the cocktail hour outside the Regency East room. Those who chose to do so had their photos taken for the 2000 photo album of the reunion. A very tasty dinner was served in the Regency East room followed by dancing until about 10:15 P.M.

Fran Osborn who corralled enough bridge players to fill four tables passed out the prizes immediately after the dinner was completed.

Eldon "Bud" Lawson assisted Max Axelsen with passing out the golf awards to the winners among the 20 who played on Thursday on a very hot day at the Golf Club of Texas, a Lee Trevino course. Lyle Heineke had the longest drive, Bud Lawson won closest to the pin honors and Dayton Blanchard had low net. Congratulations to all of these stalwarts who braved the heat and participated. In appreciation of a couple of nice ladies that participated, Helen Commons & Bev Mulligan, they were awarded a book on the fundamentals of golf. Their scores were competitive with the gents. Max says that if he had had more books to pass out, there were others in the need of work on their game – reading or practice.

SAM COMMONS, our immediate past president, presented a plaque to the 43rd ELF, **ELAIN PIERCE**, for all of the work she does in having our newsletter printed, stuffed into envelopes and mailed. She also keeps the mailing lists and produces our Roster. It is a well-deserved honor.

Our final day, Sunday September 3rd, began with a Memorial service (detailed later in this Newsletter) in the Regency West room. This was followed by a Farewell Brunch in the Rio Grand Ballroom.

Although most of us meet each other only once a year, there were many a tear filled eye when it came time to say "Goodbye" for another year.

**MINUTES OF THE 43rd BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION SEPTEMBER 2, 2000
HYATT REGENCY HOTEL SAN ANTONIO, TX REGENCY WEST ROOM**

- A. The meeting was called to order by Pres. Max Axelsen at 9:12 A.M.
- B. A motion was made and seconded to approve the Minutes of the 1999 meeting as distributed in the November 72A edition of the Newsletter. The motion carried.
- D. George White presented the slate of officers for the year 2001. The nominating committee moved the nomination of the existing officers for another year of service. There being no additional nominations from the floor, the election of Max Axelsen for President, Roger Kettleon for Vice President, William H. Wilson, Jr. for Treasurer and Jim Cherkauer for secretary was carried by a voice vote.
- E. Max announced the results of the squadron elections for director. These were listed on the preceding page.
- F. Pres. Axelsen recognized Past Presidents Robert Butler, Founder, George White, William H. Wilson, Jr., our current Treasurer, Max Osborn, James T. Murphy and Samuel F. Commons. He also recognized Lloyd Boren who has served in the past as the treasurer and secretary as well as editor of the newsletter.
- G. Max announced that the 1999 reunion had 260 in attendance while the current reunion has 210 in attendance.
- H. New Business. There was no new business for consideration. A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed at 9:40 A.M.

After the adjournment of the meeting, Max had all of the guests, visitors and family members attending with association members stand and be recognized. They were given a solid round of applause.

William "Willie" Pettus, son of our B-24 era C.O. expressed greetings from his dad, **COL. JAMES T. PETTUS, JR.**, who was not able to attend this reunion. In his own words, Willie stated, "It is an

honor to be here and represent my father. I have met so many wonderful people in the past day, and I have greatly enjoyed hearing your stories and memories. JIM wished with all his heart he could be here. He told me to tell you that his years serving with you were the high point of his life. I would like to read a few excerpts from letters he wrote home. They give us a glimpse of those times and a sample of JIM's character."

January 6, 1944. This letter finds me in New Guinea and I may be here a long time – at present I am working in operations of the 43rd Bomb Group.

Please understand that this duty is something I must do: there is a debt or some intangible emotion that makes soldiers do their duty – in my case my duty lies here at the zone of combat. But I must also do my duty to my comrades and my country. I could never be at peace with myself if I, knowing that I could have stayed in a theater of action, returned without doing so. ...I could never send another student to combat without having done it myself.

To the good men we each owe to one another an unwritten debt; if we fail in our duty to pay this, we fail in the things that make life worth while. Life goes on a long time and I would hate to live with myself that long time knowing that to spare myself I had not done my part. ...As I pass over in my mind so many of the boys who gave so freely of their lives and of those others who are doing as I am, I am depending on them to do their duty to me as I know they are depending on me.

December 18, 1944. Rain, rain, rain---mud, mud, mud – never have you seen such a mess, but we are coming out into the light and it looks as if we will be in the clear for a while at least.

I am a little tired of the war at this point. I am CO of an air strip and slowly going out of my mind – sometimes it is more rapid than others. I have not been in an airplane for a month, but I would rather be shot at any day than sit on the ground and sweat it out.

I wish I could write you more in detail, for I have some real tales to tell. They happen every day, and, although I would not have missed this for the world, I don't like to think about having to do it again.

I have buried the dead and carried the wounded, and the Japanese have done their utmost to keep us from this place, but we have won, although the price was higher than usual. There are wonderful stories to tell about this place.

August 15, 1945. Happy VJ Day. The long nightmare of war is ended at last and we seem sort of lost without it. For five long years I have been at it and it seems it is about all I know.

The relief is immense. No more missions to fly – no more flak – no more air raids – just a long rest and when I get home I am really going to take it. I am afraid I will not want to work very much. I guess I am lucky to be alive and well. I doubt if there are more than six of the original 25 who went to Canada who are still in good shape.

Time to eat and we have a house guest who has a bottle of scotch to celebrate the end of the war.

Love, Jim

WILLIE is a wonderful person, and his dad can be most proud of him. He was an excellent ambassador for his dad. He mixed with all of us so well. He made friends easily and from what this editor observed he enjoyed himself immensely at the reunion and especially at the dances in which he participated wholeheartedly. We look forward to his attendance at future reunions.

Pres. Axelsen reported on the status of our history book by Lawrence Hickey. As he reported to the Board of Directors, he is optimistic that we receive our copies of this book sometime this year. He has strong hopes that the book will go to the press by the 15th of September this year and be available in about 7 weeks after that.

Max gave a report on what he feels is the status of our armed forces today and in particular the Air Force from which pilots are leaving in every increasing numbers due to the extreme pressures put on them by the politicians sending them all over the world on a moments notice and keeping them on extended duty for long periods of time. The wear and tear on them and their families is more than they can take, so they resign and become pilots for commercial airlines in many cases.

He also announced that after the Nashville reunion next year, the Association would use professionals to organize our reunions.

Max introduced Associate member, Fred Hagen from Philadelphia, PA, to give a report on his undertakings of recovery of WWII aircraft from various parts of the world.

Fred told how they were experiencing delays in getting the B-17 *SWAMP GOOSE* out of the swamp in New Guinea, but he was fairly confident that this would take place not too long from now. He projects that the plane may be removed in October and November of this year.

He was in New Guinea last May surveying the situation. Due to the tremendous cost of recovering the engines from that plane, they plan to drop these into the swamp and leave them there. They will save the props, remove the wings and lift the fuselage by helicopter and fly that and the wings to Port Moresby, N.G. He is hopeful that they will be able to get a C-5 transport to airlift the recovered plane to the U.S. He pointed out that this plane was en route to Port Moresby when it made its crash landing in the swamp, so flying the recovered plane to Port Moresby will enable it to have completed its mission.

Fred said that the *SWAMP GOOSE* will be restored fully and hopefully will fly again. Restoration is to take place at March AFB. If it does not fly again, it will be kept on display in a museum – probably at March AFB.

He will be making a film documentary of the recovery.

The recovery of the B-24 from the dessert in Libya has run into a number of complications. He has worked with an ex Senator and they were hosted by some Libyan officials, but U.S. currency can not be spent legally in that country. In addition an archeologist has raised questions about removing the plane and has filed a lawsuit to stop this recovery.

Fred told about a P-47 they found on a mountain in N.G. The pilot apparently walked away from the wreck, but he was lost in the jungle and never heard of again. Another P-47 pilot who crashed into the jungles of N.G. survived and is alive today. They found his plane and it is recoverable. Fred listed it as in fair condition despite the fact that one wing was severed by a tree and the horizontal stabilizer was destroyed.

After a short break, Max introduced our next speaker, Cliff Neve, from Houston, Texas.

Cliff is an engineer with UNICAL Corp. and has spent 7 years in Indonesia and 4 of those in Balikpapan, Borneo. He presented a number of slides of Balikpapan today as well as some of the burning of the refinery after the raids by the 5th and 13th AAFs in September and October of 1944. The Royal Australian Air Force bombed Balikpapan throughout the war up until allied forces retook the island.

His story about the bombings and the destruction that resulted were fascinating and kept this editor on the edge of his chair. He told how these bombings did far more damage to the refineries and storage tanks than the armed forces had realized.

Today, Balikpapan is about 6 times the size it was in 1944. It is a prosperous town. The refineries refine oil primarily from the Middle East. There is a good deal of natural gas in the area also and which is being drilled and removed. It took two years to rebuild the refinery complex after the war ended.

Cliff answered a question about the fact that he had mentioned that the Japanese were well entrenched in Balikpapan today. They are there in a business capacity only, but he finds them just as ruthless as business people as they are warriors during WWII, and he prefers not to have to deal with them.

He had prepared a 7-page WWII Chronology 1941-1945 on Balikpapan, Borneo, and anyone who was interested in this history could pick up a copy. The Army Air Forces units that bombed the refineries include the 7th, 19th, 43rd, 380th, 5th, 307th and 42nd. Only the 43rd did not receive a Unit Citation for its efforts.

September 3, 2000
MEMORIAL SERVICE

Greetings
Invocation
"How Great Thou Art"

President: Max M. Axelsen
Founder: Bob Butler
Nancy Solomon, Vocalist
Wife of Bill Solomon, 403rd Sqdn.
Mildred McClenny, Pianist
Wife of Charles McClenny, 64th Sqdn.

Recognition of Members Who Died in the Past Year

Reporting for: Headquarters
63rd Sqdn.
64th Sqdn.
65th Sqdn.
403rd Sqdn.

Jim Cherkauer
Chuck Rauch
Ken Brown
"Chalky" White
Art Durbeck

Silent Reflection

Message
"God Bless America"
Closing Prayer

Chaplain Roland Fisher
Nancy Solomon, Leader
Bob Butler

**I cannot be with you in Body.
But I will be with you in Spirit.**

**Have a great time in San Antonio and
Celebrate the 20th reunion of our great
43rd Bomb Group Association.**

Chaplain Roland Fisher's Message

THE KIDS LIVE ON

Watching those kids graduate at Lackland Air Force Base during our reunion really stirred up my feelings—sure brought on memories. I was a kid, just like them, that summer before Pearl Harbor when I volunteered to fly combat with the Royal Air Force in England. Sure—I was a kind who could fly airplanes but still, legally, just a kid, because my father had to sign consent papers before I could go. When I got to London, and donned the blue uniform of a Pilot Officer in the RAF, I was with a handful of American kids on the same mission. And we became a small part of a whole bunch of kids from several countries, flying British fighters against a whole bunch of kids coming at us in planes with black crosses painted on them.

After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, we American kids, eager to defend our own country, traded our cloth wings of the RAF for the metal wings of the USAAF and were assigned to various units. Thirty of us kids, the youngest just seventeen, (he had inflated his age to get in) had been trained by the RAF in flying with airborne radar. So here we were a bunch of kids viewed as “veterans” in a new form of aerial war, but really kids, just coming “of age.”

With this background, midway through the war, I traveled to the Southwest Pacific and joined the 43rd Group, KEN’S MEN, named that because we were thought of as a favorite of General Kenny. We should have been called KEN’S KIDS because he called all of us in the Fifth Air Force his kids. I was assigned to and flew radar equipped B-24s with the 63rd Squadron but spent time in Group Operations so I got to know most of the other three squadrons. They were a terrific bunch of kids.

As kids do, we quickly made friendships, but, while quick, they were profound and long lasting. For, though we were young in years, we shared the deepest of a man’s responsibilities, that of defending man’s freedom from those who would destroy it. We did not think of ourselves as kids—but we really were, for only kids could do the job we had to do. Only kids can think nothing bad will happen to them when they line up on the runway and take off into the night with thirty-five tons of 1939-vintage airplane, high-octane gasoline, ammunition, bombs and other kids, all strapped to their fanny, to go out and destroy enemy ships and aircraft. (Which shot back and tried to destroy us.) Kids will do that because kids tend to think they will live forever. It is that mindset that allows them to fly, deliberately, into the teeth of death and tell funny stories about it, before and after.

Yes, the 43rd was a great bunch of kids from Jim Pettus, the group commander, through the ranks to the clerks and the cooks. Jim was an especially good kid—a little older by a year or two but still a kid, and a good friend to us all. (The cooks probably did the best job of all in making us feel like we were still back home with mom, because they got up every day before dawn and baked delicious warm bread.) From its leader through the ranks, the 43rd was a collection of young spirits who shared the discomfort, the rigors and the risks of carrying out a war against a fanatic enemy in the brutal and dangerous environment of the South West Pacific.

For four years the kids of the 43rd waged an aerial war over a huge battlefield from Mareeba, Australia through the savage weather and terrain of New Britain, New Guinea, Halmahera, the Celebes, Borneo, the Philippines, the Ryukus to Japan—some six thousand miles. They were a major part of a force that drove a plundering, marauding enemy back to where it began and made it surrender.

This long journey was fraught with danger of every kind. Just living in that primitive world carried great risk, and flying combat magnified it immensely. That risk took its toll. From the beginning to the end, the 43rd lost over seven hundred brave young men.

When the war ended the men of the 43rd, still kids in years, came home and scattered with the winds of life. But our comradeship continued. From time to time we would assemble from all point of the land to embrace and renew our affections—to relive the tremendous experiences we had shared.

As these reunions took place, year after year, we began to show some differences. The kids did not change, but the machinery we inhabited began to send out signals that it could not support the mission plan as well as it once did. This grew more evident as the years passed. Some of the kids just simply quit showing up.

Today, since the kids of the 43rd first started our long, risky journey to drive the enemy back, nearly sixty years have passed. Every year more of us have been unable to appear. Those of us that do, move more slowly. We see with more difficulty. Some of us need assisting devices to hear.

But when we get together—when I look closely into your lined faces—I see in your eyes—a twinkle of youth. From your eyes I see peering out—young eagles. When I look at you long-ago warriors, I am aware of the young men still within aging shells. I sense YOUR youthful pride of what YOU did so long ago. I feel YOUR gladness at having survived—YOUR sorrow for those who did not. When YOU talk, I hear the roar of engines, see the red streaks of anti-aircraft fires, hear excited chatter over the intercom, calling out enemy fighters, feel the crump of exploding bombs below. I feel the intensity WE felt when plunging an airplane into battle.

Measured just in terms of years, maybe we of the 43rd are KEN'S OLD MEN now. Our hair is white. Our faces bear lines. Our hands are stiff. Our walk is slow. I know that some of you sense that we are looked at by later generations as old—perhaps of no use. But I also know that YOU all feel just as strong and fulfilled now as you did when, as kids, you accomplished what later generations can only dream of achieving. In your minds, YOU are still the young men who fought those battles so long ago.

President MAX AXELSEN sent the following letter to the editor:

September 4, 2000

Max M. Axelson
Col. USAF (Ret)
8406 Dorsetshire St.
San Antonio, TX 78256

Dear Col. Axelson,

I just wanted to say thank you for the opportunity to speak to the men and women of the 43rd Bomb Group Association. To me, it was an honor and a privilege to just be in the presence of such a great group of American's. I sincerely hope that your reunion was a wonderful experience for all!

Having lived in SE Asia, especially Balikpapan, has given me at least some insight to the trials that all of you experienced as you helped push the Japanese back to Japan. It was quite humbling to stand next to the remains of the Japanese 127mm guns behind the refinery and imagine your formations coming in over the target. The sacrifices all of you made are incredible!

I would very much like to continue my association with the 43rd and to correspond with any veterans of the Balikpapan raids. I am currently in the process of writing a book that follows along the lines the Balikpapan Chronology that I passed out. Any first hand accounts by air or ground crews would be greatly appreciated as well as ultimately included in the book effort.

Again, thank you very much for such a wonderful honor to speak to the 43rd Bomb Group!

Sincerely,

[Cliff]

Cliff Neve'

2123 Green Cove Lane

Sugar Land, TX 77479

281-313-6383

katy4neve@msn.com

PS: Enclosed is a donation to the 43rd BG Association for general use.

OUR HISTORY. As this Newsletter was going to press, the editor received word that LARRY HICKEY has once again changed the date for the publication of our history. This time he says it will be published with that of the 22nd BG at the end of this year.

DAVID A. ADAMS DIARY CONT. DAVID is a former 403rd & 64th Pilot from Bellevue, NE

- May 7-12 '43 Spent time flying back and forth from Mareeba to Port Moresby. Packing planes, unloading, setting up new camp ground, etc.
- May 13 Lot of people got orders to go home. Most of the old pineapple army. People got promoted, etc. 21 new 1st Lts. came in. "Racioppo" was on the list to go home.
- May 15 Flew a mission out of 64th. More or less a milk run. Lost a B-24 today.
- May 16-20 On alert most of the time. Spent most of the time checking Blount out in B-24. Did gunnery, night and day landings etc.
- May 21 Bad day. Capt. P.I. Williams (C.O. 64th) and Lt. Nauman lost. This makes the 5th C.O. of the 64th lost and all but two or the original crews of the 64th. Also a B-24 missing. Also our crew was transferred from the 403rd to the 64th today.
- May 22-28 Spent the week getting settled in the 64th. Lost a couple B-24s during the week.
- May 29 Flew mission to Madang. We led the flight of six. Bombed docks and strip. Lot of A/A. Everyone made it back.
- June 1-2 "Steve" banged up 53 today. Also got news the E.A. Naumann and crew are missing. I just checked him out yesterday. He was still missing on the 2nd. Zeamer] was out about 12 hours today photographing New Britain.
- June 9-10 Flew a night mission to Rabaul. Everyone made single runs. We dropped 8-500 Aerial Bursts and 10 Frags. Started a lot of fires. "Steve" was the weather ship.
- June 12 Early morning mission over range to Lae, up Vitiaz Str. to Madang, to the Admiralty Is, to Kavieng, down through Bismarck Sea, just north of New Britain. Then on Home.
- June 13 Made Captain today.
- June 14 Our world really blackened this morning. "Pick" was killed today. C.P. Jack Ryan (who made Capt. Yesterday) was killed. Two crewmen lived, but were badly injured. I'm not sure of the names, but I believe I read in 43rd newsletter, that one of the men is still alive. Our crews were very close, having come all the way from Hawaii.
- June 15 Was Pall Bearer today. Also "Steve" told me that my crew and I were placed on D.N.I.F.

- June 16 Zeamer got shot up bad today. C.P landed A/C. Bombardier was killed. Four other crew-members were wounded. This must have been the flight that Zeamer got the Congressional Medal of Honor for. Our crew was asked to take this mission.
- June 17-28 I became Sq. Executive and operations officer. Had word that Mitch Cobeaga heard that I was killed. Must have gotten the story on "Pick" and I mixed up. Stayed busy setting up mission, getting planes off and back, briefings, etc.
- June 29-30 Set myself up on the strike plane. Flew to Doba. Got out of Doba about 120 miles and No. 3 engine ran away. Couldn't feather it and caught afire. No. 4 started acting up. Kicked out bombs on the way to Doba. Our artificial horizon, altimeter, rate of climb went out. Couldn't raise Doba, so went over the range and back to Jackson. Was lucky to find a search light. Landed about 0600. Not a nice landing, but we walked away from it.
- July 1-10 Worked in operations. Sent my crew to Sydney on the 6th. "Steve" got back from Sydney along with Kaplan, to take over operations on the 8th.
- July 11 "Steve" got off first and Capt. Gowdy last. Then a B-24 spun in. Lost Hammond and Crew. Gowdy circled until daylight. Then bailed out his crew. Plane crashed in back of 403rd. 63rd lost a 17.
- Jul 12-Aug 2 Spent time in Sydney. Swede and I spent a lot of time with the dentists. It was cold, so we stayed in our flat and drank, ate and slept. On arriving back in Moresby, I found out I was to be C.O. while Holcutt was on leave.
- Aug 3 Long mission today. I flew Co-Pilot with Steve. 65th lost a B-17. Pilot was Breenan, big Bill's old Co-Pilot.
- Aug 4 Went to meeting with Col. Hawthorn and picked ten men to go home. I was the only officer and nine men. Four were from my crew. (Roy, I'm not sure if you were one of the four) I didn't feel right about it when I was the acting C.O.
- Aug 5 Found out Brecht would be our new C.O. Holcutt went to group.
- Aug 7 R.O. Brown, Swede, Wilcox, Olson, Daune, Singer, Pittman and Howard got orders to go home from our outfit.
- Aug 8 Steve and Kaplan had to land at 14 Mile. One 90th Crew bailed out with no trace of them.
- Aug 9-17 Worked with Brecht on several missions. Lots of briefings etc. Flew a search mission on the 17th. Found crew, 4 men dead, five others O.K. On return found my orders to go back to the states.
- Aug 19 Roy, I think most of our crew got off this morning for home. I got off later and spent the rest of the day with Mitch Cobeaga.
- Aug 20 Got to Brisbane and found Swede and the old gang still there.
- Aug 21-Sept 1 My birthday today (Aug. 21). 23 years old today. Bought a couple of stones to take home. Had a few drinks. Spent the next 10 days waiting around.

Roy, my diary ends here. It was taken away from me in Hawaii, along with all the pictures I had. They were returned to me after the war ended. I hope this will give you some idea what we went through. I believe we had as many missions as anyone in the S.W.P.A. plus no Purple Hearts. We were written up for the Silver Star, but never was able to find out if it was issued.

Good luck and God Bless You.

"CRUNCHER"

The End.

[This diary was updated in answer to an inquiry from **ROY E. BAKER**, 64th Waist Gunner from Apple Valley, CA, which appeared in the Jan. '99 Newsletter. The parenthetical remarks () to Roy were probably added when **DAVID** made a copy of his diary for **ROY**. The editor did change the spelling of some words such as Mandang to Madang, etc., but there was no attempt to change the story recorded in the diary.]

[Ed. note. Since the current editor took over the Newsletter, there have been three diaries published from our members. These have been in serial form, including the one above, but they have been devoted in the most part to the earlier years of the 43rd's history in the Pacific. Starting below will be the diary of **JIM RODELLA**, 64th Gunner from Pittsburg, PA, that takes place near and at the end of the hostilities. This will appear in 3 issues of the Newsletter. The editor also participated in some of the missions described below.]

Combat Missions

Mission

- 1 Jan 27, '45 Ship 865. From Tacloban Strip to Fort Drum or El Fraile Island at the entrance to Manila Bay. Time 6:05. Points 1. Total time 6:05. Remarks - Carried 4-2000 lb. Bombs, 3 direct hits, one hung up. 7 bursts of ack-ack. None hit us. It came from Corregidor.
- 2 Feb 3 Ship 429. Frags. Target - Cebu City, Cebu, Philippines. Time 2:30. Total Time 8:35. Points 6. Total Pts. 7. Remarks - Went over target made three runs. On the third run we got 3 bursts of ack-ack, 1 hit us in the nose and wrecked the hydraulic system. When we landed, the nose wheel folded giving us credit for a crash landing. 5 extra points.
- 3 Feb 8 Ship 543. Target - Marveles, Bataan, Luzon. Time 6:25. Total time 15:00. Points 2. Total points 9. Remarks - No ack-ack. Ground support. It was a cinch. 8-1000 lb. bombs.
- 4 Feb 15 Ship 430. 9-500 lb. bombs. Target - Takao A/D Formosa. Time 2:05. Total time 23:35. Remarks - Had to turn back. No. 3 engine throwing oil. Had to feather it. Had to salvo bombs in ocean. Rough Landing. No flaps.
- 5 Feb 18 Ship 428. Target - Corregidor Is. Luzon. Time 6:30. Points 1. Total pts. 10. Remarks - Carried 9-500 lb. bombs. 6 hits. 30 min over target. Watched the navy shell the beach for invasion. No ack-ack.
- 6 Feb 19 Ship 262. 12-500 # clusters of frags. Target - Takao Town, Formosa. Time 11:20. Total time 34:55. Points 3. Total points 13. Remarks - No hits. Bombed by radar through clouds and missed target. 20 min. over target. Heavy ack-ack. About 300 bursts. No fighters.
- 7 Feb 22 Ship 808. Target - Clark Field, Ft. Stotsenburg, Luzon. Time 7:45. Total time 42:40. Points 1. Total pts. 14. Remarks - 100% hits. 8-1000 lb. bombs. Ground support.
- 8 Feb 26 Ship 395. Target - Manila, Luzon. Time 7:00. Total 49:40. Points 2. Total 15. Remarks - Carried 6-1000 lb. bombs. 100% hits. No ack-ack. 20 min. over target.
- 9 Mar 1 Ship 430. Target - Tainan, Formosa. Time 11:05. Total 60:45. Points 3. Total 18. Remarks - carried 9-500 lb. frag. Clusters. 100% hits. 10 min. over target. 150 bursts of ack-ack. Lt. Sills' ship hit. We burned the city to the ground. Givin' them hell now.

McGuire Strip Mindoro

- 10 Mar 8 Ship 395. Target - Clark Field, St. Stotsenburg, Luzon. Time 12:25. Total 73:10. Points 3. Total 21. Remarks - Carried 8-1000 lb. bombs to bomb Jap troops but had to return with bombs because the Jolly Rogers bombed our own troops. No ack-ack.
- 11 Mar 13 Ship 428. Target - Formosa. Time none. Pts. none. Remarks - Had to return No. 2 engine throwing oil. Had to feather it. Salvoed bombs. There went \$8000 of the taxpayers' money into the drink.
- 12 Mar 14 Ship 256. Target - Mako Is., Formosa. Time 10:00. Total 83:10. Points 3. Total 24. Remarks - Dropped 8-1000 lb. bombs. Went after gasoline storage tanks. Got a few hits and started large fires. Got about 30 bursts of ack-ack. Lt. Lewis' and Olmstead's planes hit. At this point missions were getting rough.

13 Mar 17 Ship 028. Target – Toyohara, Formosa. Time 10:15. Total 93:25. Points 3. Total 27. Remarks – Carried 12-500 lb. bombs. Weather closed in; had to drop them in the drink again. We did get ack-ack. We were holed in the left wing, right wing and right horizontal stabilizer. Ack-ack getting worse.

From Clark Field

14 Mar 23 Ship 430. Target – Jitsugetsutan, Formosa. Time 8:15. Total 101:40. Points 3. Total 30. Remarks – Dropped 4-2000 lb. bombs with 100% hits on the power plant that supplied $\frac{3}{4}$ of the power for all Formosa. Smoke up to between 6 and 8000 ft. before leaving target. Plenty of ack-ack. 2 ships hit.

15 Mar 28 Ship 256. Target – Belete Pass, Luzon. Time 4:30. Total 106:10. Points 2. Total 32. Remarks – Dropped 8-1000 lb. bombs with 100% hits on Jap troops. No ack-ack. Flew pretty low and got a rifle shell through our wing. Size of hole was Jap .31 mm or 7.7.

16 Apr 1 Easter Ship 865. Target – Giran A/D, Formosa. Time 8:45. Total 114:45. Points 1. Total 41. Remarks – Dropped 32-120 lb. frags. Went after parked planes. Started 5 on fire. Very light ack-ack. On account of the holiday our tail gunner said a prayer over the intercom just before going over the target. It relieved the tension.

17 Apr 5 Ship 395. Target – Hong Kong, China. Time 9:40. Total –124:35. Points 3. Total 44. Remarks – Dropped 8-1000 lb. on shipping at Victoria docks by radar. Went over the target 4 times. 1 hole in our ship. Heavy ack-ack. *To be continued.*

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

GLENN E. 65th Pilot from Springfield, TN., July 22, 2000. Reported by ARNOLD M. HUSKINS.
God Bless.

DEAN BONSALE from 403rd. God Bless.

HARRY BRADLEY from 403rd. God Bless.

MURREY DEGGER from 403rd. God Bless.

MICHAEL T. EDSALL 64th Pilot from Bristol, IN, on July 26, 2000. Reported by his wife,
SANDRA. God Bless.

WILBERT "JACK" KLUTE from 403rd. God Bless.

JOHN SWEENEY 64th Radio Operator from Centerville, MA, on April 14, 2000. God Bless.

WILLIAM "RADAR" HOOVER 63rd Navigator from Seabrook, TX. Reported by his wife,
VIRGINIA. God Bless.

CHESTER C. KENNEDY 65th Pilot from Konawa, OK in 1995. Reported by his brother, Dr. Arthur
Kennedy. God Bless.

EDWIN B. STUELAND, 65th Nose Gunner from Carlsbad, NM, on January 16, 2000. God Bless.

FRANK WALDEN 403rd Statistics from Dallas, TX, on August 2, 2000. God Bless.

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

There was a middle-aged guy who bought a brand new Mercedes convertible SLK.

He took off down the road, flooring it up to 80 mph and enjoying the wind blowing through what little hair he had left on his head.

"This is great," he thought and floored it some more. He looked in his rearview mirror and there was a Florida Highway Patrol Trooper behind him, blue light flashing and siren blasting. "I can get away from him with no problem" thought the man and he floored it some more and flew down the road at over 100 mph.

Then he thought, "What am I doing? I'm too old for this kind of thing" and pulled over to the side of the road and waited for the State Trooper to catch up with him.

The Trooper pulled in behind the Mercedes and walked up to the man. "Sir," he said, looking at his watch. "My shift ends in 30 minutes and today is Friday the 13th. If you can give me a reason that I've never heard before why you were speeding, I'll let you go."

The man looked back at the trooper and said, "Last week my wife ran off with a State Trooper, and I thought you were bringing her back!"

The State Trooper said, "Have a nice day!"

Some questions to ask yourself while seeking universal truth and the meaning of life.

Why is the man who invests all of your money called a broker?

Why do croutons come in airtight packages? It's just stale bread to begin.

Why are a wise man and a wise guy opposites?

Why do we park on a driveway and drive on a parkway?

Why do overlook and oversee mean opposite things?

"I am" is reportedly the shortest sentence in the English language... Could "I do" be the longest sentence.

If lawyers are disbarred and clergymen are defrocked, doesn't it follow that electricians can be delighted, musicians denoted, cowboys deranged, models deposed, tree surgeons debarked and dry cleaners depressed?

Why is it if someone tells you that there are 1 billion stars in the universe, you believe them. But if they tell you a wall has wet paint, you have to touch it to be sure?

Recently a thief in Paris got away with stealing several master paintings from the Louvre. However, after planning the crime, breaking in, evading security, getting out and escaping with the goods, he was captured only two blocks away by the gendarmes when his Econoline van ran out of gas. When asked how he could mastermind such a crime and then make such an obvious error, he replied:

(Brace yourself. This is going to hurt!)

"I had no Monet to buy Degas to make the Van Gogh."

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 15th of the month before publication. Late arriving material will be included in the following Newsletter. **PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY. DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO SEND MATERIAL IF AT ALL POSSIBLE TO SEND IT EARLIER.**

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