



43RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC.
"KEN'S MEN"
NEWSLETTER 78th EDITION
APRIL 2001



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Web site: www.kensmen.com

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

Our good man Bethel Ray, of Arrington, TN, is getting our Nashville reunion together. He is doing a fine job and the myriad of things to be done is being accomplished. A large percentage of our membership live within 600 miles of Nashville, and with guests and family members attending, we expect a significant turnout. We hope to see many of you good and able-bodied members in attendance!

Initial information regarding our reunion is contained herein. Please retain this for reference and let's all of us assist Bethel in making this reunion one of our very best. Additional information on the reunion will be provided as necessary, in subsequent newsletters. You will note that your registration with the group, on checking in at Nashville, has been reduced to the A.M. Should you arrive in the afternoon or evening, we will get you checked in the following morning. These new hours of registration will give you more time to settle in and allow you more time for participation in the things of interest in Nashville, the music capital of America.

We are becoming an association, advanced in age, and the number of future reunions may be limited. Our median age must be around 82 years and our ranks are diminishing at a rapid rate. Where do we go from here? Do we just go into extinction, or do we expect our offspring, relatives, etc., to continue our history and preservation of our WWII adventures? As your current president, I'm not sure that I could make the appropriate decision. Please give this issue your best thinking since this will be an item of discussion at our group meeting on Saturday morning at Nashville.

May your Easter be blessed and the Lord give you his grace.

My best to all, Max.

Our good President, Max Axelsen, makes this most important request of those who plan to attend the 2001 reunion.

Bethel Ray, our reunion Chairman for this year's reunion at Nashville, is working full speed to put things in order. To do that, he needs the number of people who plan to attend. That is essential to define transportation needs, meals, tours of interest to you and a number of other details. Your hotel reservation does not reflect the information needed. Reunion information is presented at the end of this newsletter. Further information will be included in subsequent issues, but please remember that your registration should be received **NOT LATER THAN** September 1, 2001. If you cancel for whatever reason, your funds will be returned. So **please** assist Bethel in getting all the "ducks" lined up for our reunion at Nashville.

We're expecting a great turnout and hope to see you there!!

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

**Treasurer's Report
43rd Bomb Group Association
01-01-2000 to 01-01-2001**

Income

Dues	\$	5,530.00
Life Member	\$	1,900.00
Donations	\$	380.00
Interest	\$	1,914.00
PX	\$	861.21
Advance Pay	\$	500.00
Total	\$	11,085.21

Expenses

Printing	\$	5,650.29
Postage	\$	1,577.16
PX Supplies	\$	541.25
Office Supplies	\$	176.18
Telephone	\$	208.34
WW II Memorial	\$	2,050.00
Help & Lease Equipment	\$	900.00
Gifts	\$	568.32
San Antonio Reunion Expense	\$	1,731.58
Total	\$	13,403.12

Net

01-01-2000 Starting Balance	\$	27,034.23
2000 Expenses Loss	\$	(2,317.91)
2000 Balance 12-31-00	\$	24,716.32
2001 Reunion Advance	\$	(2,000.00)
CD Canyon Investment Co.	\$	30,000.00
Net Worth	\$	56,716.32

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

On behalf of our group, I surely hope someone in our membership is considering stepping in to take over our secretary/editor position. As published in our January Newsletter, Jim Cherkauer, will leave that position and we must have a replacement in this most important position. I believe that position to be the most important in our organization, and it is fundamental to keeping this fine association to continue in existence. SO, SOME GOOD PERSON OF OUR MEMBERSHIP STEP FORTH AND ACCEPT THIS POSITION. Jim will assist you in every way possible to help your transition into this most important and interesting assignment. There's no compensation involved, but the Group will cover all expenses. Included therein are your costs for printing paper, group phone calls and other as-

sociated 43rd business. In addition, the Group will cover your hotel costs and registration fees for our annual reunions. Computer capability and availability are most essential requirements. If you have questions, please direct them to Jim or me. Please, let us have someone out there ... step forward.

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

It is with great sadness that we report the passing on Saturday, March 10th, of our most stalwart and courageous leader, **Col James T. Pettus**, after a long and valiant struggle with cancer. Those of us in the B-24 era who served under **Jim** knew him as a firm but very fair commanding officer. He would not ask any of us to do a task that he would not have been willing to do himself. He was selected by Gen. Douglas MacArthur to be one of a handful of officers to make the first allied airplane flight to land at Atsugi Airdrome, Japan, after the Japanese had asked for peace that ended WWII.

His son, Willie, was at his bedside when **Jim** took that last flight. **Betty** has our most heartfelt sympathy and our prayers that she may continue to hold her own in her struggle to confront her serious illness.

The following obituary appeared in *The Honolulu Advertiser*:

James Thomas Pettus, Jr., 81, of 'Aina Haina, died March 10, 2001. Born in St. Louis, MO. A colonel in the U. S. Army Air Corps who flew B-24 Liberators with the Fifth Air Force's 43rd Bombardment Group and a free-lance journalist for the Associated Press. Preceded in death by wife, Elizabeth Young. Survived by present wife, Elizabeth Pettus; seven children; fifteen grandchildren. Private services held at National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Punch-bowl. Memorial donations to St. Francis Hospice of Honolulu. No Flowers. Arrangement by Williams Funeral Services.

Many of you will probably remember that the 43rd was reactivated a few years ago as the 43rd Airlift Wing stationed at Pope AFB in Fayetteville, NC. A Fort Bragg/Pope AFB Open House is being scheduled along with an air show on July 7-8, 2001. **Kelly E. Morgan**, TSgt, USAF, 43rd Airlift Wing Historian, has been given permission by our President **Max M. Axelsen**, to use material such as graphics and pictures from our web site for a heritage display they are planning to use at the Open House. **Kelly** sends along the following information.

Plans feature creating a display of the accomplishments of the 43rd Bombardment Group and lineal descent units for public display. The intent is to have a non-profit educational and informative heritage display of the 60th anniversary of the 43rd Bombardment Group.

The Fort Bragg/Pope Open House is a two-day air show, public open house. Participants in the Open House include the Air Force Thunderbirds, Army Golden Knights, 82nd Airborne Airfield Seizure demonstration, Ninth Air Force A-10 demonstration team (Flying Tigers of Pope AFB).

Air Mobility Command (AMC) declared FY-2001 as the Year of Retention and Recruitment (YORR). The Open House is an excellent avenue to salute the proud lineage of the 43rd and salute the last 60 years of accomplishment as one of the Air Force's premier organizations. The heritage display will also feature displays of the 23rd Fighter Group (Flying Tigers), Pope AFB.

If any of the Kensemans is interested in attending, please contact TSgt **Kelly E. Morgan**, so that you will be received with the honor and distinction you have earned.

The address provided is **Kelly E. Morgan**, TSgt, USAF, 43rd Airlift Wing Historian, DSN 424-1731. Phone: 910-394-1731. E-mail <43AWHO@pope.af.mil>. His personal e-mail address is **Kelly.Morgan@pope.af.mil**.

In a mid December letter **Harley Hayden**, 65th Gunner from Hannibal, MO, reports that winter really came to Missouri. He reported 3"-4" of rain followed by freezing temperatures, sleet and some 4" of snow. So he put away his fishing gear and retrieved his old but not forgotten photos from his days in the 43rd.

Harley says that he has a very good collection of photos since he shared the tent with a gunner/photographer and his C-3 camera. They had access to a photo lab and made many prints from negatives. He sent photos to **Jose Halegan** of his crew as well as other interesting subjects. His story does not have a happy ending as the cameraman and their tail gunner, **Tex Pruitt**, were both wounded and ended up going to Australia to recover and then on to the States.

In looking over his collection of photos, **Harley** says that one thing became clear to him. It was the matter of DISCRIMINATION. There were 3 bombardiers in the squadron with the respective ranks of Buck Sergeant, Corporal and PFC. They flew as gunners and eventually rose to the rank of Master Sergeant. He writes that the late **Bob Watson**, our former reunion director from Lebanon, IL, was a Buck Sergeant Bombardier. **Rudy Cesko** one of those bombardiers came to the 43rd via the 19th BG. Another was **Johns**. **Harley** says that they never used first names so he does not know what **Johns'** first name was. All these men had trained at Langley Field in the States in the same hanger where they had a trainer and bombsight for training bombardiers.

While in Port Moresby new planes and crews started arriving. The enlisted men on these new crews had ranks of Staff Sergeants and Technical Sergeants. He has 8" x 10" photos of several of these crews. He says Sgt. **Johns** looks to be no older than 16 at the time. **Reginald Tatro**, 65th Radio Operator from Greenfield, MA, was a Staff Sergeant who "... looked every bit of 18 years old." **Chris Consino** and **J. Nigasian** were corporals while **Neslect** was a S/Sgt. These latter 3 men went down with **John Woodard's** crew after some 40 plus missions.

Harley says that he was about to be promoted to S/Sgt. since it was customary to promote an enlisted man one rank when he finished his missions, but they stopped the practice when it was his turn to ship home. "Story of my life - one day short ..."

Later **Harley** sent **Bill** his dues and mentioned that his brother **Ken** was visiting him and since it was too cold to go fishing, he spent a good deal of time reading our Newsletters. He took some copies back to Arkansas with him.

Harley in another letter wrote that while he was reading the passages from the diary of **Francis Denault**, 63rd Pilot from Deerfield, FL, in the January Newsletter, he recalled that he, **Harley**, had been wounded on a skip bombing mission in the wee hours of the night on the 27th-28th of February 1943. As reported in **Denault's** diary, the bad weather in the Bismarck Sea area held the mission planned for the 25th up a day, but the crews went out the next day even though the weather was not great.

Harley says that he would like to claim that his crew sank the first ship in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. They sank a ship in the harbor at Wewak, NG, that night which technically was two days before the Battle of the Bismarck Sea.

The 65th C.O., Maj. **Bud Fletcher** piloted the plane, although the crew was that of Pilot **Dalenberg**. Maj. **Fletcher**, a gung-ho pilot according to **Harley**, checked out several ships in the harbor before selecting the largest one that was also armed with guns. On the start of the bomb run, the plane received no gunfire, but then all hell broke loose. Maj. **Max H. Mayer**, Bombardier from Memphis, TN, reported in a letter that, "We got them and they got us 3 purple hearts and 9 air medals." When the plane returned, it was literally running on fumes as it touched down in Port Moresby. **Harley** says that they spent too much time in Wewak Harbor, but they did put 5-500 lb. bombs into the side of the ship.

He reminds us that Hannibal, MO, was the hometown of Samuel Clemens better known as Mark Twain.

William L. Jobe, 64th Radio Operator/Gunner from Bremerton, WA, enclosed his 2001 dues in a letter in which he notes the following diary entry for 15 January 1944: "Our crew was scheduled for furlough to Sydney but no C-47 was available to fly us from Dobodura to Port Moresby. Captain **Art Mulligan** (64th Pilot from Del Ray Beach, FL) flew us over 'the hump' in one of our own B-24's, Number 484."

"As a fellow-member of the 64th Squadron, let me [**William**] belatedly thank him for the timely favor and hope he is currently enjoying his retirement in Florida, Land of the Chad."

Alfred "Fred" Hagen, Associate member and guest speaker at several of our reunions, reports that his office has moved to **2207 State Road, Bensalem, PA 19020**. The phone number and fax numbers are respectively – **215-633-7540** and **215-633-8720**. This information was enclosed in a very nice Christmas card.

This editor has been added to the membership list of the 22nd Bomb Group through the consideration of **Don Evans**, the man who is coordinating the legal action that group has taken against **Lawrence J. Hickey**, Associate member and military author from Boulder, CO, with regard to their long awaited history.

Their December 2000 Newsletter, No. 201, indicates that **Larry** has sent to **Don** the photos and materials of 114 or so 22nd men who loaned these materials to **Larry** as he was to research and write their history. [The 43rd is next in line behind the 22nd for books **Larry** is writing.]

Don informed the editor that the 22nd also was stationed at and operated from Owi at the time of the Balikpapan missions. In the January 2001 edition of the Newsletter on page 22, **Paul Nichols** mentioned that the 22nd flew to Balikpapan from another island in the story taken from his book *MY LUCKY DICE*. **Don** says the 22nd flew from Owi at that time.

An article in the 20th **AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION FALL 2000 NEWSLETTER** points out that if associations like theirs did not exist, "Who would have gone after the Smithsonian when, in 1994, it became clear Enola Gay was about to be used as the centerpiece of a national *mea culpa* for America's atom-bombing Japan? ... And when, a couple of years later, Air Force Memorial Foundation needed a letter writing campaign to keep a District of Columbia neighborhood association--backed by Marines and a former Navy Secretary – from keeping the proposed Air Force Memorial off Arlington Ridge (in D.C.), who could generate an effective letter writing campaign?" It goes on to point out that their association was instrumental in seeing that a bronze model of the B-29 was placed at the Air Force Academy. They go on to say, "We suggest doing your part to support this outfit, for once it's gone, the revisionists will have a field day."

This was written in defense of claims by some that associations like theirs are really not needed. It was a call to their members to keep the association alive and well. This is food for thought.

Folmer Sogaard, 63rd Pilot from Centralia, WA, reports that he missed the last two reunions but plans to make it to Nashville. His problem was a dike project he had been involved with over the 8 years prior to 2000 when finally the dike was built.

Folmer included a newspaper article from the paper, *The Chronicle*, dated September 23, 2000, with colored photos, including one of **Folmer** overseeing the construction. In 1992, **Folmer** and his neighbors had decided that something had to be done about the flooding in their neighborhood. Working with the government and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers moves as slow as molasses in the coldest of weather. On Feb. 8, 1996, the area was hit with a record setting flood resulting in extensive devastation. **Folmer's** home was "soaked for the first time that year, requiring weeks of drying with a dozen fans running around the clock."

It was after this flood that the residents voted, nearly unanimously, to assess themselves to raise the \$300,000 needed for the project referred to as the Long Road Levee. After lots of government red tape and years of frustration, environmental impact studies, etc., the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided two-thirds of the cost for the project. The county, Lewis County, provided some expertise and a loan. The project was finally started in 2000 and had two weeks more work to go as of Sept. 23, 2000. The dike that is supposed to be 10 feet high, but appeared higher to the reporter John Henderer, is 2,200 feet long and runs up to I-5. That meant involving the Department of Transportation that in turn meant more red tape. Now the project is complete, but not before some of the area residents had their homes raised in case of more flooding.

With this project completed, the 85 year-young past president of the Centralia Chamber of Commerce, **Folmer Sogaard**, will have some time to relax and intends to make it to Nashville this year.

Janice Olson, Associate member and our "Resident B-17 Aficionado" from Apple Valley, CA, has a number of requests for information or materials from those of you who might be able to give her some much needed information.

She is searching for information with regard to B-17 #41-24520 *THE FIGHTN' SWEDE*. Check your diaries, scrapbooks, etc., to see if you have any information on this plane. 63rd records indicate that it was last heard from on May 8, 1943, at 0900 about 50 miles north of Madang. She has a complete crew list, but any information on the loss and/or the crew would be appreciated.

Another request is with regard to a B-17 #41-9234 with Royal Air Force (RAF) markings that was assigned to the 19th B.G. and later was assigned to the 64th Sqd. This was around August 1942. The plane was shot down 8 January 1943 after a mission to Lae. "Does anyone remember this plane? Was it over-painted or did it fly with the RAF markings? Is there a photo of the plane taken while it was with the 19th or 43rd Bomb Groups? Does anyone have a log or record showing they flew this aircraft?" She needs the material for publication. [See **Bowen** page 22.]

She also is seeking a photo of *SAN ANTONIO ROSE*, B-17 #41-24458, for an article and possible television program on the loss of General Walker on 5 January 1943 in a combined 43rd Bomb Group/90th Bomb Group daylight mission to Rabaul.

If you have any information or material about any of these that you could share with Janice, send such information to her at **P.O. Box 1317, Victoryville, CA 92393-1317**. Phone: **760-241-3144**. Fax: **760-242-0973**. E-mail: **B17Project@aol.com**. Janice will gladly reimburse you for copies of materials that you may have and will share with her.

We have another query regarding a WWII B-17 F. **Thomas Lyon**, an instructor in History at Cuyahoga Community College in Parma, Ohio, is researching the history of this particular plane named the *SPIRIT OF CLEVELAND*. The plane left Cleveland on July 4, 1942 and was headed to the 5th AAF. Thomas wonders if perhaps it ended up in the 43rd BG. Does anyone recall this aircraft or anything about it? You may contact Thomas by phone at **216-987-5500**.

His e-mail address is <**Thomas.Lyon@tri-c.cc.oh.us**>.

Early in 2001 the editor had a phone call from **Russ Burnett** 64th Flight Engineer from Conway, MA. After chatting a while, RUSS said that this might be of some interest to our readers. When the war was over and the B-24s were being ferried back to the States in what the editor believes was called the **SUNSET PROJECT**. **Russ'** crew ferried a 63rd B-24 #025 from Ie Shima back to the States. The pilot of their crew was **C. T. Hooten**.

In the July 2000 Vol. 75 page 9 edition of this Newsletter there is the story of **F. Neal Fugate**, 63rd Pilot from Rancho Bernardo, CA, piloting this plane on what is believed by some experts to be the last US AAF plane to bomb Japan in WWII.

Jesse Fulton, 64th Bombardier from Blountville, TN, sent **BILL** his 2001 dues along with a letter in which he says that he plans to make it to Nashville this year since it is only about a 4 hour drive from his home. Like many men of our age **Jesse** says that he has some health problems but they will not keep him from making it to the reunion.

In early December 2000 **JESSE** phoned **Alvin Haas**, 64th Crew Chief from Des Plaines, IL, and reports that **Al** was home recovering from another heart operation but he was intending to make it to Nashville. We wish you well, **Al**.

Another one sending **Bill Wilson** his 2001 dues and planing on making it to Nashville is **S. L. Flinner**, 63rd Pilot from Prospect, PA. **S. L.** says that he is patiently waiting for our history and hopes that he lives long enough to see it. [Don't we all?]

Another Pennsylvanian remitting his 2001and 2002 dues is **Rocco Arruzzo**, 63rd Tail Gunner from Milnesville, PA. **Rocco** says that he has found the past couple of Newsletters to be very interesting. He finds the exploits of the 43rd BG to be exceptionally so.

Rocco writes that the life in New Guinea must have been very harsh and is sorry that he could not be there to help, but he was too young at the time and could not enlist before November 1943.

He asks the staff to keep up the good work on the Newsletter. He hopes to make a reunion one of these years.

Sending a Christmas card to the Association and writing "Thanks For the Memories," **Gladys I. Stevens**, widow of "**Lucky**" **Stevens** from the 64th, has sent us a new home address.

1375 E. Jack Jouett Rd., Louisa, VA 23093.

Also sending **Bill** a Christmas card with his 2001 dues is **Garnett L. Peeling**, 65th Ordinance from Presque Isle, MI. **Garnett** writes that due to his bad legs he is unable to attend any more reunions, but he wants the Newsletters to keep coming.

Dale W. Allton of Newark, OH, mailed his 2001 dues and reminds us that he is still looking for a 5th AAF patch. He hopes one of our readers will have a spare to sell to him. If you do, please contact him at 78 Utah Ave., Newark, OH 43055-3580 or phone him at 740-366-3061.

[Editor's suggestion. **Medals of America** 1-800-308-0849 or 1929 Fairview Rd. Fountain Inn, SC 29644-9137 sells these. In a catalog from early 2000 such a patch was listed at \$5.00.]

Dale says that he and his wife no longer have arguments. They are now called "marital adjustment sessions." With that he wishes all a Happy New Year.

Lucian F. Konopa, 403rd Gunner from Buffalo Grove, IL, has paid his 2001 dues.

Sad news arrived via the Internet from **Nick Arabinko**, 64th Pilot from Punta Gorda, FL. He had just received word from **Mary Paulson** that her father, **Dr. Henry S. Blank** 64th Flight Surgeon from Gainesville, FL, had passed away on Jan. 5, 2001.

Those of you who knew **Doc Blank** found him to be a very warm person just full of life. He was a friend to everyone he met. He attended many of our reunions and will be missed very much. As **Nick** wrote, "Although his passing will be mourned by all who knew him, the memory of his service to his 64th Bomb Squadron Comrades and to our Nation, will live on forever. God Bless."

E-mail from **Roland T. Fisher**, our Historian and 63rd Pilot from Lake Oswego, OR, bore the sad news of the passing in late November 2000 of **Marjorie Landt**, wife of **John Landt** 63rd bombardier from Sequim, WA. **Margie** suffered a long time with Parkinson's disease. **Roland** writes that before her illness **Margie** contributed a great deal to our association.

Roland and **Allan S. Clatworthy**, 63rd Pilot from Vancouver, WA, have been trying to ease **John's** pain after the loss of his wife. **Allan** is himself suffering from an advanced stage of cancer, but he is right in there fighting.

John joined the 63rd as one of a pool of replacement bombardier/navigators while the 43rd was at Dobodura, N.G. He was originally assigned to the Third Attack Group, but shortly after joining them they converted their B-25s to attack craft with all those 50 caliber machine guns in the nose, so they had no need for bombardiers and transferred them to other outfits. After filling in as a bombardier with the 63rd, **John** was assigned to **Allan's** crew. He was with the 63rd at Dobodura, Nadzab, Owi

and Leyte. He returned to the States from Clark Field. He and **Roland** were tent mates at Nadzab and Owi and became fast friends.

Roland promised to mail to the editor a story he received recently from **John**. It arrived via snail mail a few days later and is well worth including in our Newsletter. The story predates **John**'s days with the 43rd, but that really does not matter. The story entitled "GEORGE AND I" follows:

It was the summer of 1942 and an unprepared America was at war. The United States Army Air Corps was desperately organizing to establish training facilities for thousands of pilots, air crew members and support and maintenance personnel.

Recruits were assigned to a base for a particular segment of their training and two or three months later rushed to another base for the next segment. There was little chance to establish a lasting friendship simply because the pressure of training schedules left no time to really get acquainted. And if you did get to know a fellow trainee, chances were that two months later the two of you would be a thousand miles apart and never see each other again.

George and I were the exception.

This is the story of how two young men, brought together by the happenstance of war, became friends and miraculously managed to stay together through five different transfers and four different training centers and eventually into combat.

I had just completed pre-flight training at Santa Ana Army Base, Santa Ana, California and was given orders to report to Bombardier School at Williams Field, Chandler, Arizona. I reported in late at night, was assigned to a barracks and told that reveille would be at 6:00 AM.

The next morning our names were read off and we were told to line up alphabetically in four lines making up a squadron of aviation cadets. I found myself standing next to George W. Kylius Jr. He was the last of the Ks, and I was first of the Ls. This was the beginning of our friendship and a remarkable sequence of events.

Each bombardier instructor was assigned two cadets. George and I had the same instructor. We attended ground school in the mornings, then flew practice missions in the afternoons and at night. It was tough going. If you could not meet the Air Corps standards either mentally or physically, you were washed out. George and I hung in.

Depending on your accuracy with the Norden bombsight on training flights you were placed in one of three classifications, the best of which was "Distinguished Bombardier." George and I as student bombardiers once dropped five bombs each with an average distance from the target bulls eye of twenty feet. We both graduated as distinguished bombardiers.

Upon graduation we were commissioned second lieutenants. I pinned his bars and wings on George; he pinned mine on me. His officer's serial number was 0738988; mine was 0738989. We were now qualified to become members of a bomber crew.

We waited for our orders which would distribute us among dozens of air bases to become members of combat crews soon to be sent overseas. We all felt we could win the war by ourselves if we got the chance. George and I were prepared to say goodbye.

The orders were issued. Of the sixty-eight graduates of our squadron, sixty-three were assigned to various bases to become crewmembers preparing for combat. Five graduates were transferred to Carlsbad Army Air Base, Carlsbad, New Mexico to become bombardier instructors. George and I were two of the five. We shook hands; we were still together.

We reported to Carlsbad and found ourselves stuck on a base out on the desert, far from the bright lights and with nothing to do. Everyone applied for transfer, even overseas, just to get away.

Finally, we were told that all applications for transfer would be honored. George and I figured this would be the end of a beautiful friendship.

They called us into a tarpaper shack and began reading off names and destinations. People were being sent to bases all over the country. My name was read. I was to become a student in

a new navigator school just being organized at, of all places, Carlsbad. Some transfer. There were to be twenty students in the first class. George and I were two of the twenty.

Three months later we graduated from navigation school. We were now what became known as bombardier-navigators. From here we would be sent to "transition" bases to become crewmembers and sent overseas. George and I would in all probability be separated for the first time in nearly a year.

They told us a certain number of the twenty would be sent to Tucson, Arizona, some to Kansas and some to Columbia, South Carolina. They didn't care who went where, so we wrote the destinations on slip of paper and drew them from a hat. I drew South Carolina; George drew Kansas.

George was the gentlemanly type and smoked a pipe. He was from Ohio and was engaged to a girl named Margie. I was from Spokane and also engaged to a Margie. George and I had been through a lot of military misery together. We hoisted a beer, wished each other luck and went our separate ways. We had ten days to report to our new base.

Ten days later I checked in at Columbia Air Base late at night. When I walked in the barracks to which I was assigned and walked down the hall, I passed the open door to a room occupied by a familiar figure. None other than my friend, George Kylius.

"George, how the hell did you get here?"

"Aw, I gave a guy fifty bucks to trade orders with me back at Carlsbad."

We started flying "transition." I was picked as a member of one crew, George a member of another. We were flying B-25 Bombers. It was dangerous. Inexperienced pilots and crews flying day and night in a much faster and more powerful airplanes than they had ever known. Every day there were family members in the Officers Club waiting and hoping that their relatives would be found still alive.

Finally we were deemed ready to be sent overseas. From Columbia crews were being sent to England, Africa, South America, Panama, Australia, China, Hawaii, Alaska and several bases in the South Pacific.

Nineteen crews were given brand-new B-25s and told to stand by. The serial number on George's plane was one digit higher than the number of mine. One day they put de-icing equipment on some of the planes, including George's, but not on mine. We knew that he was going to either Alaska or England and I was not. Well, maybe we could get together after the war. Two days later they removed the de-icing equipment and ordered all nineteen crews to fly independently to Townsville, Australia. George and I agreed to find each other in Townsville.

Flying all alone, five hundred and fifty miles south of Hickam Field, Hawaii en route to Christmas Island, our left engine blew up and our right engine was losing power and sputtering. We were at seven thousand feet and losing altitude fast. We unloaded everything that was loose except our Mae West life preservers and our parachutes. We threw out 1200 pounds of mail, machine guns, spare parts, ammunition, salvoed our bomb bay tank with 500 gallons of gasoline, and all our personal belongs. We leveled off at 700 feet and four hours later crash-landed at Hickham Field. We had totaled out a brand new B-25.

After that our crew was flown to Australia by troop carrier and at Townsville assigned to the 90th Attack Squadron of the Third Attack Group, a low-level B-25 Skip-bombing outfit at Dobodura, New Guinea. We reported in.

On arrival at the hut that served as headquarters we were told to sit down to wait for the squadron commander who would welcome us aboard. I sat down next to a sergeant who was working at a typewriter. On his desk was the military record of Lt. George Kylius.

Of all the units in the South Pacific to which we might be assigned, we were not only assigned to the same group, but to the same squadron in that group.

I interrupted the sergeant. "I see Lt. Kylius is assigned to this squadron."

"Yeah, he was, but he was killed yesterday on his first mission."

Later I asked headquarters if I could have copies from George's file of all the orders that were issued to him since pre-flight training. Mine had been thrown overboard when we lost that engine. They were amazed to learn that every order issued to him in all that time also applied to me.

I was lucky enough to survive forty missions against the Japanese in the South Pacific. My friend, Lt. George W. Kylius, wasn't lucky enough to survive even one.

E-mail from our Vice President and 64th Pilot, **Roger G. Kettleson** from Las Vegas, NV, indicates that he is moving along steadily in planning the 2002 reunion in Las Vegas. He has made an agreement with a reunion management organization, "The Reunion Brat" out of Kennewick, WA. Tentative plans are to hold the reunion in the Golden Nugget Hotel in downtown Las Vegas from Sept. 22nd through Sept. 26th, 2002. A check of the calendar shows that the reunion would start on a Sunday and run through Thursday.

Francis "Frank" J. Drab, 403rd Armorer/Gunner from Venice, FL, had written in mid January concerning what appears to be a mix-up with regard to his membership. Apparently he had not been added to our mailing list although when he joined the Association last year he says that he paid his dues for 2000 and 2001. Hopefully this will be straightened out quickly. The editor has e-mailed **Frank** to find out which newsletters he did not receive for 2000 so that these will be forwarded to him.

Information and/or stories from **Frank** have appeared in recent newsletters. He sent a large package of photos and a story (Jan. 2001 Newsletter) with them to the editor last year. The editor scanned the photos and sent copies to our Web Mistress, **Tracy Tucciarone** an Associate member from Indianapolis, IN. Most, if not all, of these now appear on the Group Web Site.

Frank sent along interesting story with his letter. In October he had open-heart surgery to replace a defective aortic valve. He says that he has recovered fully and is back to normal planning his commitments for his annual May, June or July trip and is planning on making it to Nashville too.

While on a trip to Ireland and France, to visit cousins, this past June/July **Frank** was honored when he was invited to take the Flag down at the end of the day – the flag that flies over the National Cemetery at the Normandy Beach heads. "I could not suppress my tears during the playing of Taps and the rifle volley as I stood among 12,000 plus white crosses as I gently lowered our Flag." That is quite an honor bestowed on **FRANK** and we of the 43rd should be proud of what he did. We feel certain that he was proud that day of his service in 43rd.

FRANK included his e-mail address <drab1@home.com>.

Gordon F. Bavor, Headquarters Radio Operator from Norwalk, CT, has paid his dues for Life Membership. He also says that he and his wife, **Elizabeth**, read every word of each Newsletter. They missed the 2000 reunion due to family commitments, but they plan on making it to Nashville. They thank the staff for their time and talents in preparing, publishing and mailing the "KEN'S MEN" Newsletter.

GORDON included his e-mail address <gfbavor@juno.com>.

Paul J. Blasewitz, 63rd Tail Gunner from Clearwater, FL, has remitted his 2001 dues. He also asks that we add his duty to the listing for him in the 2000 Roster.

Those of you who attended the 1998 reunion in Springfield, MA, will recall that our late C.O. of the B-24 era, Col. **James T. Pettus**, Pilot from Honolulu, HI, pinned the DFC on the President of our Association at that time, **Samuel F. Commons**, 65th Flight Engineer from Flourtown, PA, some 54 years after the medal was supposed to have been awarded to **Sam**.

In January 2001 **Sam** was the subject in one of an installment series of articles appearing in the *Springfield Sun* by Chris Lelienthal, a staff writer for the paper. This series is dedicated to highlighting the lives of area military veterans. [Springfield is a suburb of that metropolis Flourtown.]

Pictured in the article is Sam with the certificate awarding him the DFC along with the medal. Another photo is of the crew on which Sam served. They are standing alongside B-24 #395. Quoting directly from the article:

Retired Flourtown businessman and World War II veteran Sam Commons is not about medals and distinctions, although he did receive the Distinguished Flying Cross for courage shown during a bombing mission over New Guinea. What's more important to Commons is the camaraderie and empathy he shares with his fellow veterans who served in the air, on the ground and on the sea.

Commons was part of the Cain-DeCesare B-24 Crew with the 43rd Bomb Group of the Fifth U.S. Army Air Force. Flying 53 combat missions over the South Pacific, Commons, 76, recalled the 10 young men who made up his crew and how they watched out for each other.

He said one particularly stressful mission during which the courage and composure of his crew was put to the test occurred at the end of a bombing run. Commons heard the sound of an explosion and shrapnel hitting metal. Coming on the flight deck, he saw pilot Lt. Walter B. Cain slumped back in his seat, with "Blood spurting from the front and back of his neck where a piece of shrapnel had ripped through." Commons wrote in his wartime diary.

"My first thought was to stop the bleeding, so I ripped off my shirt, wrapped it around his neck and applied pressure to the wounded areas."

As crewmembers administered first aid to the wounded pilot, Commons "occupied the pilot's seat and assisted our co-pilot Lt. Vincent "Joe" DeCesare in flying the disabled plane," Commons wrote.

After landing the plane successfully, the shaken crew let out a cheer. Days later Commons and another crewmember were informed they would be considered for the Distinguished Flying Cross.

No mention of it was made until more than 50 years later. On Sept. 1, 1998, Commons was finally awarded the distinction.

"Up to that point, I know what I did," Commons said in a recent interview. "I didn't need the medal."

Today Commons is a member of the 43rd Bombardment Group Association, which organizes annual reunions for the servicemen from that outfit, and the VFW Post 7919 of Springfield Township. The camaraderie and empathy which was an integral aspect of his wartime experience continues through his associations with these two organizations.

"The camaraderie in a group like this is unbelievable," he said.

Still, Commons holds a particular fondness for the members of his original crew, all of whom, including the injured Lt. Cain, survived their numerous missions.

"Here are 10 guys who never met each other, and they said, 'You're a crew,'" Commons recalled.

One crew member, radio operator Max Zachem, reminded Commons just how important they were to each other during a visit some 10 years after the war.

Commons recalled Zachem introducing him to his family, saying, "This is the man who saved my life."

Taking him aside, Commons asked Zachem what he was talking about. "Don't you remember?" Commons recalled his friend saying.

During one of the crew's South Pacific missions, Zachem attempted to walk across a catwalk along the belly of the B-24 bomber. There were open doors on either side of the catwalk for bomb deployment. The plane lurched, and Zachem fell toward an open door.

Commons came to the area to investigate why the doors were still open, as the bombing run was complete. Discovering his friend clinging for dear life as the wind sucked him out, Commons wrapped his legs around a bomb strut and reached for Zachem's belt, pulling him to safety.

403rd Tail Gunner, Alton "Doug" Leaman, from Indianapolis, IN, writes that he served on the crews of Col. Rauser and Frank Houhmen while in the 43rd.

Doug wants to say, "Hello, and offer his thanks to Shad (64th Pilot from Friendswood, TX) and Naomi Shaddox" for their appeal with regard to cancer in the January 2001 Newsletter. Doug had colon cancer surgery on January 23rd. His letter is dated Jan. 26, 2001. He wrote that the surgeons removed 12" of bowel.

He also suffers from 4 major blockages in the heart. He writes that his right lung is gone, and that he had circulation tests on his legs a couple of days before his colon surgery. Although the results of the test were only fair, he is not scheduled for surgery.

His problems now and over the past 6 years were caused by too many cigarettes. He thought that he was smarter than two doctors who advised him to quit smoking.

In addition to the named ailments, his immune system is so bad that he can not be around people. He has been treated at the V.A. hospital for the past 3 years. He says the doctors there are good. The V.A. treatment saved him a bundle of money.

Doug says that his wife, Iliene, now has to do all of the household chores that he took care of and he feels sorry for her. He sends his best to all and thanks the association for the Newsletter.

Austin R. Matteson, 65th Pilot from Portland, OR, says he really enjoyed the January 2001 Newsletter. He was impressed by the story from Patrick Freeman, 65th Pilot from Eagle River, WI, on page 6, but the Pilot, Ostin Matison, mentioned in the story was actually him, Austin Matteson.

The Mother Miller mentioned in that story was Ralph Miller. Austin served as copilot on that crew. He writes that Ralph was called "Mother Miller" by the crew because he really babied them.

While flying their B-24 en route to Brisbane, Australia, in September 1943, they too had a nose turret installed at Hickam Air Base. Their B-24 was named *THE PREGNANT WHALE* and had a large painting of a whale on the nose.

Austin says that when he and Parker Floyd finished their 50 missions, they managed to transfer to an F-5 (P-38) photo recon outfit since neither wanted to go back to the States and become a B-24 instructor. Austin flew 38 missions in the F-5. The planes had no guns, just cameras. He writes, "Hairy at times. They didn't want us to hang around and fight, just bring back the pictures of the future targets."

He appreciates the job the staff is doing with the Newsletter and thanks all.

Here is an item that should be of interest to many of our members, especially those from the New England area.

Mary Strelecki, the daughter of Mary Lois and Bill Wilson, her husband Dave Strelecki, and Melinda Davis have purchased the Red Clover Inn in Mendon, VT. The three of them are now the proprietors of this lovely inn located in a beautiful 13-acre Vermont setting at the foot of the Green Mountains northeast of Rutland, VT. Parts of the Inn date from the 1840s.

This has been a big move for Dave and Mary who had been associated with a Wilson auto dealership in Western Texas for many years, but it is something they have had in mind for a long time. They have a web site, <www.recloverinn.com>. The address is Woodward Rd. Mendon, VT 05701. The phone number is 800-752-0571. The e-mail address is <redclover@vermentel.com>.

Wouldn't it be nice to have some of our 43rd Association members pay a visit to this inn and introduce yourselves? The staff wishes them the very best in this new business venture.

William C. Burns, 64th Gunner from Roanoke, AL, has become a Life Member of the association. He also asks that we change our records to show that his middle initial is "C." Hopefully that should be an easy matter to attend to.

A check for dues to the association arrived from **Richard R. Golze** who also asked for additional information regarding the upcoming reunion. Since his name does not appear in our 2000 Roster, the editor has asked our Recruitment Officer, **Edward L. Gammill**, 63rd Crew/Flight Chief from Phoenix, AZ, to send him an application form. Meanwhile the January 2001 Newsletter and current Roster have been sent to him. Maybe before this goes to press we will know his duty in the 43rd if he served or if he is to a new associate member. His address and phone number are **637 Kingsley Trail, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304-2320** and **248-647-3747**. If any of you recognize that name, let him know that you are also a member of our association.

The 19th Bombardment Association is holding its 2001 reunion in Atlanta, GA. The dates are still a bit tentative but are given as Wednesday, Oct. 10th through Saturday, Oct. 13th. No other details are available at this time.

The 90th Bomb Group Association will hold its national reunion in Greenville, SC, from Wednesday, Aug. 29th to Sunday, Sept. 2, 2001. The reunion will be at the Hyatt Regency, 220 North Main St., Greenville, SC 29610, phone 864-235-1234. Their host will be James A. McMurria, 4 Blenheim court, Greenville, SC 29607, phone 864-297-6342. The Armed Forces Reunions Inc. of Norfolk, VA, will be instrumental in the planning and conduct of the reunion.

Leonard O. Bowen, 63rd Radio Operator from Karrinyup, Western Australia, has sent the editor a newsy letter. He is also interested in registering with **Larry Hickey**, Associate member and military author from Boulder, CO, for a copy of our history. The editor's advice is to wait until the book goes into print – whenever that may be. Meanwhile hold on to your money.

He writes that he was very interested in the story in the July 2000 Newsletter about the encounter the 63rd B-24 had with a Japanese night fighter over Davao on Sept. 4, 1944. Our current Group Chaplain, **Roland T. Fisher**, from Lake Oswego, OR, piloted that plane.

Leonard says that when he joined the 63rd on Owi about Sept. 7, 1944, he was assigned to a tent with other enlisted men that he thought were on the crew of Lt. **Hickson**. He names **Bob Fagan**, engineer from Philadelphia, **Ben Spencer**, engineer, **Adam Bohnert** and a gunner called **Hughes**. He no longer recalls the names of the other men in the same tent. These men told **Leonard** of their 63rd plane's radar turret being damaged by a Japanese night fighter over Davao. He assumed that this was a second such incident that took place at about the same time as the one reported in the July Newsletter. That is easy to understand as he thought that all of these men were on **Hickson's** crew.

The editor checked with **Roland Fisher** who affirmed that only one such incident occurred. He also pointed out that **Fagan** was his flight engineer who played a major role in helping them to get the plane flying after the elevator controls had been severed by a cannon shell. **Roland** says that was not only his engineer but "... a helluva good one." He will supply the editor with a list of his crewmen as soon as he digs them out of his files.

Leonard also says that the entire crew of Lt. **Hickson** was killed when returning from R&R in early 1945 when their plane crashed on takeoff from Owi.

Dayton Blanchard, 65th Pilot from Cibolo, TX, and Cloudcroft, NM, provided the National Daedalian Headquarters Bldg. at Randolph AFB, San Antonio, TX, with a beautifully framed picture of the 4 squadron B-24s over Ie Shima. That is the picture that our late leader and pilot, Col. **James T. Pettus**, of Honolulu, HI, had commissioned a few years ago, and that his son distributed extra copies at the 2000 reunion in San Antonio. Dayt writes that the picture hangs proudly in the first office complex to the right as you enter the lobby. "As near as I could see after viewing dozens of pictures throughout the building, ours is the lone Bomb Group represented. I wrote a brief history of the Group's progress in the Pacific Theater during WW II and posted it on the back ... just so future viewers won't forget 'Ken's men.'"

Dayt recently received his copy of *The Legacy of Daedalus*. This book is a compilation of "war stories" written by members of the Daedalians. Dayt wrote one of the many stories included. He finds the book fascinating and urges anyone interested to purchase a copy of the book from **Turner Publishing Co., 412 Broadway, P.O. Box 3101, Paducah, KY 42002-3101. The phone is 270-443-0121.** The cost of the book is around \$50.00.

Dayt also writes that it now appears that former military pilots who did not stay in the service to retirement will be accepted into membership in the Fraternity of Pilots. He is looking into this to bring us additional information in the future.

Dirk Salverian, Lt. Col. USAF of Vienna, VA, and son of **Haig Salverian**, 63rd Nose Gunner from Huntington, PA, has written to thank **Michael J. O'Malley**, 63rd Navigator from Pittsburgh, PA, for the article on **Paul Cresser**, 63rd Pilot, and his crew in the January 2001 Newsletter.

Dirk says that his father, **Haig**, was a member of that crew and remembered that first and only mission as one on which they bombed a rock, but Dirk located the bombardier, **Roy Voda**. In a telephone conversation, **Roy** corrected **Haig** and told him that at the last minute they realized they had the wrong target and pulled out. That was their first conversation in over 55 years.

Haig remained on Ie Shima for a brief period after the war ended and was then shipped to Japan where he joined a PBY squadron as an observer before heading back to the States. He then rejoined his old company, ITE, a circuit breaker manufacturer and retired after more than 48 years. He resides outside of Philadelphia with his lovely wife, **Rebecca**.

John E. Taylor Jr., 64th Engineer from Tulsa, OK, sent a check for his 2001 dues along with a letter. He writes, "Man, has anyone else noticed how often these years pass? Lot faster than they did back in '43 and '44. It's becoming more of a privilege every year to pay these dues."

John says that he still keeps in contact with the surviving members of his crew - **William Burns** [Gunner from Roanoke, AL], **Chuck Thomason** [Craigmont, ID], **Joe Wisnack** [Gunner from Stuart, FL] and **Donald King**. He also keeps in touch with **Noelle Holohan** [Largo, FL], widow of **Matt**. He tried to contact **Thomason** recently but could not make the connection. He did talk to **Burns** not long ago.

John's wife, **Barbara**, comes from a location about 60 miles south of Nashville, so they do hope to attend the 2001 reunion.

Julia I. Wrights, Associate member and widow of the late **Clair Wrights**, 63rd Radio Operator, from Chambersburg, PA, sent **Bill** her 2001 dues. She wrote that she has not been to a reunion since June 1998 when **Clair** died. She does enjoy reading the Newsletter and sends her "...thanks to all those who work so diligently to keep the organization alive."

She expressed her disappointment with the failure to have a history by now. She wonders just how many of our men have died in the 11+ years that the book has been in the making. She says that, "It seems that excuses and delays are Larry Hickey's trademark." **Julia** says that we will have to hope and pray that we will be around if or when it is finally finished.

Also sending in his 2001 dues is **George Stahl**, 403rd Flight Engineer from Mechanicsburg, PA. While reading the Jan. Newsletter, he was reminded rather vividly of a couple of missions in which he participated that still give him nightmares.

First, he recalls that mission to Davao in which **Orland Poels**, 403rd Flight Engineer from Green Bay, WI, saved his ship from a near fatal collision with another B-24. **George** says, "I can still see their ship after Pilot **Weaver** was killed, dropping down on us from my top turret position. So close, it seemed like a few yards from crashing into us. I owe **Orland** my life for his quick reaction."

The other is described by **Paul Nichols**, 65th Pilot from Picayune, MS, in his book, *MY LUCKY DICE*. This was the Oct. 10, 1944 mission to Balikpapan, Borneo, also appearing in the Jan. 2001

Newsletter. **George's** plane made an emergency landing on an island in the Halmahera chain with a dead tail gunner aboard as well as a badly riddled plane. When they inspected the tail assembly, they found that the control bar had a one-inch hole in it from an unexploded shell. In the process of this examination, a ground crewman started to refill the fuel tanks and without thinking started to light a cigarette. **George** says that his reaction was "... quick and physical."

Later he saw what war in those islands can do to a man. A ground crewman who was being rotated back to the States walked into a spinning prop and was made into mincemeat.

"War I say is the epitome of man's stupidity."

Emil B. Pruitt, 63rd Radio Operator and Weather Observer, has recently become a new member of the association. He served on the crew of Pilot **Larry Hansbarger** from July 1945 to December 1945. **Emil's** wife is **Valeria Grey Pruitt**. His address, phone number and e-mail address are 623 W. Green Rd., Bloomington, IN 47403-4326, 812-332-3743 and <pru1@prodigy.net>.

With his application for membership were 4 copies of a photo of **Emil** standing by the nose art of the B-24 *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. He says that he flew several missions in this plane. [The editor is confused. That plane was a 64th Sqd. aircraft.]

Another sending **Bill** his 2001 dues is **Quentin R. Ember**, 403rd Line Chief from Newport News, VA. He writes that he is enjoying the Newsletter and reading it makes him think about "... the 13th Bangor, ME, and the Great BOAT RIDE TO MELBOURN, AUST. 'OUCH' THE 'ARGENTINA.'"

Bringing his dues up to date through 2001 is **Cleve Eno**. He wants his squadron listed in the Roster. It was the 65th. He also reports a new address – 19934 Blue Lake Road, **Emily**, MN 56447. He served in Operations while in the squadron and filled in as a gunner when needed. His e-mail address is <ceno@emily.com>.

Cleve writes that he would like to have the address of our B-17 aficionado and Associate member, **Janice Olson**. [It is in your 2000 Roster, **Cleve**, as well as appearing earlier in this Newsletter.] **Janice**, he says that in your film you listed **Jingozian** as a crewmember but he was a 65th Ball Turret Gunner. He says that he and **Jingozian** graduated from Power Plant School at Chanute Field on Jan. 22, 1942. The latter was a former jockey from Canada. He thinks that **Hammerslack** was also on the same plane. They all shipped the next day to Mitchell Field, Long Island, where they had army cots all over inside the hangar. In about a week they shipped by train to Bangor, Maine, in a great deal of snow. It was there that **Cleve** was assigned to the 65th. They soon boarded a train for Boston and the Queen Mary. He does not believe that he knew **Len Davis** at that time. "The coach, Father Shay, held services for all denominations on Saturday and Sunday on that [30] day trip. We stopped off shore in Florida to load up supplies and then on to the harbor at Rio de Janeiro in South America. It was a free port and there were German airplanes flying over us. Two days later we sailed out of the harbor and had a destroyer escort. Then they poured to coals to it." [Editor's comment – Brazil was at war with the Axis at that time so this port was not a free port. The planes were probably older US planes flown by Brazilian pilots. The editor was in pilot training with several Brazilian cadets.]

Cleve writes that the Queen had a bent prop shaft on one of its 3 propellers and the ship shuddered. He recalls going through an oil slick from a tanker as well as having a battery radio and listening to a claim that the Germans had torpedoed the Queen Mary. After leaving the harbor at Cape Town, South Africa, some of the men practiced going down the side of the Queen as it headed to Java. After reaching the island of Madagascar, the ship turned SE toward Fremantle in Western Australia.

"We volunteered for KP in the officers mess as we got good food there. We had a riot at the general mess as all they were serving was mutton! The next day they had boxes of oranges so we each had one."

Upon landing in Australia the men were stationed at Ranwick Race Course. After a week of confinement, the men were released to go to Sydney. "Cars were lined up on the streets – no soldiers had to walk down town."

Their next stop was at Newcastle where they practiced taxiing single engine airplanes. The pilots would taxi them close to the hangars where the mechanics took over. While there he saw a Brewster Buffalo Navy fighter-bomber land. It was piloted by the Philippine Air Ace Capt. Jesus Vilamar. "He was about 5 feet tall. He had piloted a P-35 fighter and shot down 5 Japs in one day. He ended up after the war as General in charge of the Philippine Air Force."

He knew the two 65th cooks at Owi as they had met at A & P School in Chicago and were good friends. They were **George Finnegan** from Superior, WI, and **Clifford J. Kocha**, 65th Mess Sgt. from Green Bay, WI. Cleve was assigned to operations under **James L. Harcrow**, 65th Pilot from Ft. Walton Beach, FL. Before **Jim** there was **Paul I. Williams**, a big strapping guy and an all-American football player from the Univ. of Oklahoma.

Cleve went on leave with **Williams** and the late **Art Fletcher** one Christmas. They were supposed to return on New Year's day, but **Paul** said the engines didn't sound right so they spent New Years Eve presumably in Sydney. The following day they took off and headed under the Harbor Bridge.

65th Operations was on duty round the clock for 3 solid days during the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. He and others flew a number of missions when gunmen were ill. He flew with **Hal Winfrey** and was wounded while skip bombing a Jap destroyer at Wewak, N.G. Cleve and **Winfrey** were in the hospital with shrapnel wounds when **Winfrey's** crew went on a night mission to Rabaul only to be shot down by a night fighter. His navigator was the late **Jose Holguin** from Los Angeles and the host of our 12th reunion at Anaheim, CA, in 1992.

Cleve says that he sent a good many of his memoirs to **Larry Hickey** and hopes that they will be returned to him some day. [Larry Hickey has said many times that he would return these materials upon request. Have you tried contacting him, Cleve?]

In a short note along with his 2001 dues **John Pontillo**, 64th Ordnance from Massapequa, NY, writes that "As an old Air Corp Ordnance air man from Bangor, Maine to New Guinea there is nothing much to report." He does appreciate getting the Newsletter regularly.

Another who says that he has nothing to report when sending **Bill** his 2001 dues is **Ol' Man Willard Ogle**, 63rd Waist Gunner from San Angelo, TX. He thinks everyone is doing a great job for the association.

Sending **Bill** a check for 2001 dues is **William A. Austin**, 403rd Photographer from Hurst, TX. **William** wrote, "Thanks for all you have done for the Group. We are all indebted to you. May your landing always equal your takeoffs."

Also paying his dues but for 2002 is **Richard Mrowinski**, 403rd Gunner from West Allis, WI. He hopes to see everyone at the next reunion.

Expressing thanks for all of the hard work the entire staff takes to get the Newsletter out four times a year is **Daniel Ferguson**, 63rd Flight Engineer from Whittier, CA. He also brought his dues up to date.

Also expressing his appreciation of the job done by the staff with the Newsletter is **Robert L. Burke**, 403rd from Medway, MA. He paid his 2001 dues to **Bill** and wants to know if the 43rd has T-shirts of *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. If not, he would like to know where to get one. [Bob, the Collings Foundation from your neck of the woods, Stow, MA, sells such T-shirts at every stop along the yearly air show trail that it follows. It should not be too difficult to contact the foundation at Stow and purchase one.]

Stanley Lebar, 403rd Gunner from Severna Park, MD, has paid his dues through 2002. In his accompanying letter he tells a rather unusual story.

A few years ago his daughter, a Navy doctor, was stationed on Okinawa. She would go to Ie Shima to visit the island and enjoy its beaches. She sent him photos of the island as it looked then including the permanent monument to Ernie Pyle and the decorations of the burial caves. **Stan** says none of it was recognizable to him. In turn he sent his daughter photos of the island as it was during our occupation in 1945, a photo of the original Ernie Pyle monument, nose art from our B-24s stationed there and the photos of the Japanese Peace envoy that landed on the Island on Aug. 15, 1945. His daughter shared these with the mayor of Ie Shima who gratefully accepted copies of these for their historical records.

His daughter asked **Stan** to join her there for a visit, but he did not want to ever return to the island he remembered as a hot, dusty, lonely place with intermittent Japanese air attacks at night. He recalls the long missions to Japan or the China coast, the boredom and the inevitable k-rations that passed for food. The only redeeming feature that he can recall of Ie Shima was the buzzing of the tents of the 90th Bomb Group when returning from a mission.

Stan writes that when he left Ie Shima, he knew that he never wanted to see the place again. He certainly did not imagine that he would have a daughter visiting the island many years later, sending him photos of it and telling him what a lovely island it had become. "... I doubt that she ever understood why I politely declined her invitation to set foot on that spit in the middle of the China Sea we once called home."

Ben R. Damron, 65th from Stanford, KY, says that he generally pays his dues at the reunions, but due to his health he did not make it to San Antonio so he mailed his check to **Bill** for his 2001-2002 dues.

He wrote that the S.A. reunion was the first he has missed since he started coming to the reunions in 1984 at Washington, D.C. He had planned to attend the 2000 reunion when his doctor told him he could not fly and that the S.A. weather was too hot for him.

Ben says that **Alice Barnes**, Associate member from Winchester, KY, and widow of the late **Joshua Barnes**, 65th Pilot, called him after she returned from the reunion. They arranged to meet in Lexington for lunch where she presented him with a reunion cap and some pictures she took at the reunion. He says that they had a good visit and he really appreciates the cap and pictures.

Health permitting, he and **Jane** plan to drive to Nashville for the upcoming reunion. Their daughter has offered to take off from work and drive them there. It is about a 3.5-hour drive from home.

Sometime ago while looking through an old filing cabinet, **Ben** found copies of the daily newspaper that was issued on the Queen Mary. He had intended to bring these to San Antonio last year, but since he could not attend he mailed them to our President, **Max Axelsen**, along with a copy of the program on the dedication of the Memorial Chapel at Port Moresby. He wonders if these reached **Max**. [They probably were on display in the Hospitality Room.]

Bringing his dues up to date, **James H. Brown**, 65th Crew Chief from Clearfield, PA, says that he has not been able to attend any of the reunion, but he does enjoy the newsletters and thanks the staff for the good job it is doing.

John Y. Barbee, 64th from Winters, CA, has become a Life Member of the association. He also made a contribution to the organization. He says that the 2000 Roster does not show his squadron. He was with the 64th from late 1942 into early 1943. He says that he is the only living member of the crew on the plane that went down with **Meyer Levin**. [What was your duty in the 64th?]

Joseph R. Esposito, 65th Navigator from Malverne, NY, enclosed an extra contribution to the association along with his 2001 dues. **Joe** has made note of the story submitted by **Patrick J. Freeman**, 65th pilot from Eagle River, WI, that appeared on page 6 of the January 2001 Newsletter.

Joe began as Navigator on the crew of **Parker S. Floyd**. He enclosed a copy of the July 31, 1943 orders transferring both **Marcus D Carrel's** crew #39-4-41 and **Floyd's** crew #39-4-27 from Briggs Field, TX, to the AAB, Lincoln, NE. Joe was on their new B-24 when it flew from Lincoln to California to Hawaii where it underwent, in the time of two weeks, a modification to add a nose turret. They then proceeded to island hop to Townsville, Australia, where they had a short layover before flying to Port Moresby, N.G.

After arriving in Port Moresby, Joe was transferred to the **Marcus D. Carrell** crew. The crew flew most of its missions in *TARGET FOR TONIGHT* #060. Joe writes that he talks with **Marcus**, 65th Pilot from Houston, TX, from time to time by phone.

Very unfortunately Joe is the only surviving member of his original crew. The others were all KIA.

He also cites that on page 18 of the January Newsletter mention is made of the Collings Foundation and the restored B-24 J they have named *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL* after that plane in the 64th. He reports that this plane visits the Long Island, NY, area Republic Airfield each year and his name appears on the port side of that plane. [Along with several other 43rd Assoc. members.]

Joe received a call from the 65th's eminent Flight Surgeon, Dr. **Milton "Bud" Gusack** from Chevy Chase, MD. He was so thrilled to hear from Doc who sounded so good over the phone. Joe, like all of us who knew **Doc Gusack** in the days of active duty, thinks that he was one terrific flight surgeon.

The members of the original two crews cited above are:

P 2nd Lt. Marcus D. Carrell
CP 2nd Lt. Hayward W. McEver
N 2nd Lt. Alfonso D. Giacchi
B 2nd Lt. Jack W. Clark
E T/Sgt. Aloys R. Rueter
R S/Sgt. William C. Dodge
AE S/Sgt. Joseph E. Davis
AR S/Sgt. Frank A. Markowski
G S/Sgt. Walter J. Wyiekrykas
AG S/Sgt. William H. Yeager

P 2nd Lt. Parker S. Floyd
CP 2nd Lt. Ambrose F. Broughton
N 2nd Lt. Joseph R. Esposito
B 2nd Lt. Philmore H. Green
E T/Sgt. Robert H. Shaw
R Sgt. Ralph G. Reed
AE S/Sgt. Gerald B. Brown
AR S/Sgt. Floyd L. Wise
AG S/Sgt. Henry J. Kaufmann
G S/Sgt. Thomas S. Freeman

Joe looks forward to the Newsletter and wants to thank all of the staff responsible for its assembling and mailing to our members.

E-mail from **Lew H. Daws**, 65th AC Maintenance and Crew Chief from Rialto, CA, reported the death of **James T. "Mac" McClure**, 65th AC Maintenance from Suitland, MD, on Feb. 5, 2001 in Bangor, ME. Lew learned of this from **Ernie Hand** of Carmel, ME. All 3 men served together on Lew's maintenance crew when they had *BLACK MAGIC* as one of their planes. Mac and Lew were together when that plane crashed and burned.

E-mail arrived from John McClure, son of Mac McClure, and Mac's widow, **Clarissa**. It contains a long obituary in memory of Mac. This may be seen in its entirety on the 43rd's web site.

In brief, Mac died after a series of illnesses and operations following unsuccessful surgery at Andrews AFB hospital in July 1998 to repair an aneurysm in the stomach. At that time John quit his job in order to take care of his father. Mac who was 80 years young at the time of his death, had made the Air Force his career – a career that started while servicing B-17s and B-24s in the 43rd in the Pacific Theater. John says that his dad passed on to him his passion for military aviation.

On http://www.ea.com/worlds/games/pl_airwar00/mainpage.jsp those of you with access to the Internet may view a Memorial B-17 fly over in honor of the memory of Mac.

John writes that he attended one of our reunions with his father where he met several of the men with whom Mac served during WWII. He says that it was near Newport News, VA. [It is possible that this was the 11th reunion in Norfolk, VA, in 1991.]

James T. McClure was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery on Feb. 21, 2001 at 10 A.M.

John's e-mail address is <jaminmaine@aol.com>. Snail mail will reach **Clarissa** or **John** at **PO Box 333, Levant, ME 04456**. The phone number is **207-884-6735** or **207-884-6735**.

E-mail from **Howard "Andy" K. Anderson**, 64th Radio Operator from Los Angeles, CA, reported the passing of **Dr. Jackson L. Young**, 64th Nose Gunner from San Diego, CA, on Feb. 12th. **Andy** says that **Jackson** is survived by his widow, **Dot Sue**, and a son and brother. **Jackson** had been a professor at Patterson College, New Jersey and authored several plays and at least one novel.

Jackson flew nearly 50 missions as the B-24 Nose Gunner on the crew of the late **Allen Nelson**, San Angelo, TX. Allen's widow, **Mary Alene**, still resides in San Angelo. **Andy** also served on that crew. They started their tour in the 43rd on Owi and finished it on Ie Shima with the end of hostilities. All 6 of the surviving members of that crew, at the time, attended the Tucson reunion in 1999. **Andy** and **George J. Hunter**, Copilot from San Diego, CA, on that crew attended the memorial service for **Jackson** on Feb. 24th.

Robert A. Claycombe, 65th Pilot from Meridian, IN, reported the very sad news that his wife, **Sue**, "... finally gave in to her long battle with lung cancer. She died peacefully without any pain or discomfort." Our sympathies are with you **Bob**.

E-mail brings news both good and bad so rapidly. Another sending sad news this way is **Dayton Blanchard**, 65th Pilot from Cibolo, TX and Cloudcroft, NM. **Dayt** reports the passing of **Bob Hoyes** from Shavertown, PA. **Bob** served on **Dayt's** crew as a Waist Gunner/Ball Turret & Armament NCO. He leaves his widow, **Gertrude**, after 57 years of marriage.

Dr. Arvid J. Hougum, 64th Pilot from Grandview, TX, has given his son, **Dr. David Hougum**, a gift of Life Membership to our association. **Arvid** says that his son is serving currently as the Deputy Hospital Commander at Andrews AFB and is a career Air Force physician. He displays on his desk a desk model B-24 depicting the 64^{th's} *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL* also a gift from his Dad.

During the Korean War **Arvid** served for a short time as a Flight Surgeon at the Misawa AFB in northern Japan. Decades later **David** served over two years at the same base and they were still using the same old wood-frame buildings in which his Dad worked in 1951.

David's current address is **Col. David C. Hougum, 1314-2 Vandenburg Drive, Andrews AFB, MD 20762**.

Another e-mail from **Lewis B. Daws**, 65th A/C maintenance from Rialto, CA, informs us that he talked via the phone with **Arlene Roth**, Redlands, CA. She reports that **Robert "Bob" Roth**, 403rd Photographer/Gunner, is holding his own. That is good news. You may recall that **Bob** suffered a couple of strokes a while back and has not been to the past couple of reunions due to his health.

Lew also sent a photo of the B-24 *BOB HOPE*. He says that he flew in that particular aircraft from Owi to Hollandia on his way home to the States. His memory is not too clear on whether the plane aborted on takeoff or had to return to the airstrip after taking off, but they did get off later the same day or the next.

Gregg W. Johnson, 65th Pilot from Austin, MN, sent **Bill** his 2001 dues along with a poem by Lt. John Gillespie Magee, Jr. John served in the Royal Canadian Air Force from 1940 until he was killed in action about 18 months later. The editor believes that this poem appeared a few years ago in the Newsletter, but it is worth repeating even if it has been shown before.

High Flight

Oh! I have slipped the surely bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds—and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of—wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air . . .

Up, up the long delirious, burning blue
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace,
Where never lark, or even eagle flew—

And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space.
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.

Harry Urban, 403rd Bombardier from Colorado Springs, CO, included a letter to **Bill** along with his 2001 dues. **Harry** says that things are not going too well with him since the passing of his wife, **Rachel**, in March 2000. He suffers from inoperable pancreatic cancer, but his vital signs are all good. He is undergoing treatment with radiation and chemotherapy. **Harry** at 83 still has a good sense of humor and a healthy outlook. He writes, "...But who knows? As a James Bond movie was titled 'Nobody Lives Forever' – the good thing so far, I am not in pain."

He writes that he keeps in touch with a former crewmember, **Jean A. Jack**, 403rd Pilot from Murfreesboro, TN, and **Gen (Mary) Barr** from Omaha, NE, widow of the late **Dale F. Barr, Sr.** Past President of our Association and 403rd Tail Gunner.

William H. "Bill" Wilson, Jr., Past President of our Association and current Treasurer, writes that he knew **Col. Harry Urban** in 1942 when he was the squadron bombardier who made bird colonel in 1945 or 1946. **Bill** says that **Harry** is one heck of a nice guy. He chaired the Colorado Springs reunion in 1989.

[We are always saddened when we get news of our fellow Group veterans who are ill and/or incapacitated. These Golden Years have their good points and their bad ones too.]

Henry J. Porter III, 63rd A/C Maintenance from Birmingham, AL, enclosed a letter with his payment of dues. He thanks those who produce the "... excellent quarterly newsletters, and especially **Francis P. Denault** [63rd Pilot from Deerfield, FL] for his recall of the glorious battle days of the Bismarck Sea. I was there but enjoyed hearing of it from one of our 63rd warriors." He enjoyed reading about **Lt. Kirby, Charles "Chuck" Woods**, 63rd Flight Chief from Lititz, PA, and **Anthony "Tony" J. DeAngelis**, 63rd Crew Chief from Sarasota, FL. He sends a "Hello" to each of these men.

Henry mentioned that his late wife, **Lillian "Betty"** had passed away nearly 5 years ago after over 50 years of marriage.

He also recalls when **Charles A. Lindbergh** was at Owi and Biak teaching the P-38 pilots how to increase the time of flight and distance covered by their P-38 fighters.

Another new member of the Association is **James R. "Bob" Allison**. **Bob** served as a 65th Sq. Right Waist Gunner on a B-24 from March 1944 to July 1945. He served on the crew of **H. J. Franks**.

Here are the facts for your Rosters. Address – 3103 Milkyway Dr., Bartlett, TN 38134. Phone – 901-380-9205.

Arnold M. Huskins, 65th Bombardier from Pittsfield, MA, has a couple of things that have been aggravating him since WWII and he wants to get them off his chest. He feels that these might be of interest to others.

First, while reading in previous Newsletters of the Japanese surrender group landing on Ie Shima en route to Manila with thousands of American GIs watching, he notes that no one has mentioned how the 43rd's B-24s were hurriedly pushed aside and out of sight so that the 90th Jolly Rogers with their "Skull and Crossbones" would be on display along with their companions, the media, who wrote up their activities for the home papers. [The 90th BG only arrived on Ie Shima shortly before the Japanese surrendered not a month before as the 43rd had.]

Second, **Arnold** says that he read, "... that our Secretary and others, when arriving on Ie Shima were camped on part of a Japanese vegetable garden." [Ed. Note. What secretary are you referring to **Arnold**? The current editor/secretary of our association never claimed that. He camped in a sea of mud where we used bomb fin crates for floors and put coral down daily to keep from sinking deep into that quagmire. The editor did publish one story similar to what you cite, but he wondered at the time if the person writing the story really remembered the horrid conditions on Ie Shima when we arrived and months after. The editor tries not to change stories as reported to him. He does correct errors in grammar, etc. when it does not take away from the story.]

Arnold continues, "Now read this. Ie Shima was under the control of the Navy! They had arrived long before us and had set things up to make things comfortable for themselves."

"Our crew (except for our pilot) were told to camp under a huge tent where the Navy had stored many, many crates of all kinds of missiles and ammunition which covered every foot of the 'floor.' We had only one way to set up our cots (no air mattress, blanket, pillow, etc.) The tent had a leaky roof and open sides. Rain had turned the dirt floor into soft mud. So we had to move some of the crates (very heavy) and set our cots on top of them. The next morning we found that rats had dug their dens under the crates our cots were on and were prowling around looking for anything to eat. Even clothing, shoes, etc. some of those rats were as big as a full grown cat. We slept the second night wondering if the rats could have gnawed their way through the crates and set the ammunition afire. But no, they marched out of their dens and many of them had a gang of babies."

"The next day we had two six-man tents and we found an area of solid ground we could use for the tents. The Navy was not very happy to find out what had happened that caused them to take care of these Air Force nuisances. Our tents were so close to the runway that when the B-25s took off at 3 AM, everyone jumped out of bed."

Another matter that **Arnold** wants to mention is the Collings Foundation's B-17 and B-24 were scheduled to come to Pittsfield, MA, last fall. When only the B-17 *NINE-O-NINE* arrived, they were very upset. It seems that the B-24 *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL* had a problem with a tire or something and was delayed undergoing repairs and did not make it to Pittsfield. He is hoping that it will make it to Pittsfield next year.

Joseph C. Harvey, 403rd Nose Gunner from Kissimmee, FL, sent **Bill** his 2001 dues along with the very sad news of the passing of his wife, **Margaret**, on December 24, 2000. He said that this "Sort of set me back." Our prayers are with you.

After being away from our organization for a spell, **Byron "Dutch" Heichel**, 63rd Pilot and POW, writes that he talked with our Chaplain, **Roland T. Fisher** 63rd Pilot from Lake Oswego, OR, and found that the organization is still going strong. So **Dutch** is now paid up through 2003. He says that he is now feeling better and plans to stay with the association a little longer. Vital data for your Rosters are **Dutch's** lovely wife, **Julia**, address - 26510 Old Hwy. 99N, Stanwood, WA 98298-9262, phone - 360-629-2749 and Fax - 360-629-9038.

Many of you will recall the almost unbelievable story that **Dutch** presented at one of our reunions a few years ago about the horrible ordeal that he underwent as a POW of the Japanese. The torture, starvation and slave labor he endured reminded all of us of the barbarous enemy we faced during that period in our lives.

Another recruit who has joined our ranks as an associate member is **Charles Bowen, Jr.** Charles is the nephew of **Henry B. Bowen** a B-17 Tail Gunner who was killed in action while bombing a convoy near Wau, New Guinea, on January 8, 1943. Charles writes that he has joined in memory of his uncle. For your Rosters: 1124 2nd St. SE, Valley City, ND 58072, phone – 701-845-5964. [See Olson p.6.]

Waldo A. Schauweker, 64th Pilot, has sent **Bill** his 2001 dues and asks that all mail to him go to his Perrysburg, OH, address in the 2000 Roster. Apparently he and **Mary K.** move around a good deal and our postal system will not forward newsletters to his other addresses.

He writes that they still spend most of their winters at their condo, The Seadunes, located on Singer Island in the West Palm, FL area. That address is **The Seadunes 5B, 5400 N. Ocean Drive, Singer Island 33404.** Waldo says that if any of you from the 43rd are in the area, look him up.

Waldo writes that they used to attend the reunions regularly, but since so many have been located in the Southwest in recent years and "... since Old age has set in" he and **Mary** no longer have been attending them.

Mary writes that **Waldo** and crew sank one ship and shot down one Zero in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. They had the opportunity to visit New Guinea a few years ago. They did get to see a good deal of Rabaul, New Britain. He was particularly interested in the train tracks that had been "... installed in the side of a mountain (carved out by 'slave labor'). This is where the Japs had 'hidden' their lights, rolled them out when the 17s approached. We met an Australian lady who guided us all over the New Guinea Islands to places we would never have found. The natives were not always glad to see us. We chartered a little plane to take us up to a little island and flew over the Owen Stanley Mts. I can see why they were dangerous."

Waldo was one of those who helped organize the 43rd Bomb Group Association with **Robert H. Butler**, 63rd Bombardier from Fayetteville, NC, in San Antonio, Texas.

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

Donald W. Dixon is seeking information about his uncle **Sgt. Richard F. Dixon** who served in the 64th Sqd. On 7 May 1944 the B-24 D S/N 42-40525 on which he was serving was lost over New Guinea. It was piloted by **Lt. John E. Terping**. The remains of the plane and crew were found in early 1974. If any of you has any information about **Richard** and/or the plane and crew, please contact Donald. His address, phone number and e-mail address are 139-8 Farmstead Rd., Southington, CT 06489, 860-621-2826 and <Fshtayle99@aol.com>. Any information you can provide to **Richard** would be appreciated very much.

Our Associate member, **George L. Wyatt** a retired Marine from Medford, OR, was able to confirm that the plane was B-24 #42-40525 piloted by **John Terping** of the 64th Sqd. [The difference in spelling of the surname is not the significant matter here. Just contact Donald Dixon if you have any information about the plane/crew.]

Raymond Gates, 63rd Flight Engineer from West Monroe, LA, writes that in the July 2000 Newsletter p. 21, a Ms. Marjorie Becker inquired about **Grover C. Hallman** from the 43rd, but with no address given for her and he being unable to get one at the 2000 reunion, he wonders how he can contact her with information that he has. [That was the editor's goof-up, **Raymond**.] Her address is 33 Village Walk, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082.

He also wants to know if any of our readers remembers a **Stephen (NMI) Kosch** who served in the 63rd and was from Elizabeth, NJ. **Stephen** is the only member of **Raymond's** crew that he has never located. **Ray** would appreciate any information that any of you can give him. Address – **215 Forty Oaks Farm, West Monroe, LA 71291-9094. Phone – 318-396-8427.**

Along with his dues for 2001 and a donation **Jack M. Rusmiser**, 64th Bombardier from Omaha, NE, has asked that we post this Want Ad.

Wanted: Information on First Lt. (era 1945) **Stanley G. Ruby** (0773454) USAF. He should have been with the 43rd BG and probably was in the 64th Sqd. At least some pilot, copilot or navigator had him as his bombardier. Does anyone remember him?

What crew was he on when he flew on the 7-28-45 mission to Kure Bay, Japan? Which crew was his regular crew? Where was his hometown?

Contact **Jack** at **301 North 36th Ave., Omaha, NE 68131-2414. Phone – 402-342-5932.**

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

Henry S. Blank 64th Flight Surgeon from Gainesville, FL. Reported by **Nick Arabinko** and **Mary Paulson** daughter of Dr. **Blank**. God Bless.

Sue Claycombe wife of **Robert A. Claycombe** from Meridian, IN, Feb. 16, 2001 after 53 years of marriage. God Bless.

Margaret Harvey wife of **Joseph C. Harvey** from Kissimmee, FL, Dec. 24, 2000. Reported by **Joseph**. God Bless

David "Dave" Hassemer Headquarters Pilot from San Antonio, TX, Mar. 17, 2001. Reported by **Max Axelsen**. God Bless.

Bob Hoyes 65th Waist Gunner/Armament from Shavertown, PA, Feb. 16, 2001. Reported by **Dayton Blanchard**. God Bless.

James T. "Mac" McClure 65th AC Maintenance from Suitland, MD, on Feb. 5, 2001. Reported by his wife **Clarissa**, son **John**, **Lewis Daws** and **Max Axelsen**. God Bless.

Col. **James T. Pettus** Pilot and Commanding Officer of the 43rd Bombardment Group (H) from Honolulu, HI. Reported by **Max Axelsen**, Doc. **Milton Gusack**, et al. God Bless.

Lillian "Betty" Porter wife of **Henry J. Porter III** from Birmingham, AL, circa 1996. Reported by **Henry**. God Bless.

Anne Weichlein, widow of **George Weichlein** from the 65th, from Pipe Creek, TX, on Feb. 2, 2000. Reported by her daughter, **Suzanne Delamain**. God Bless.

Jackson L. Young, 64th Nose Gunner from Sand Diego, CA, on Feb. 12, 2001. Reported by **Howard "Andy" Anderson**. God Bless.

Jim Rodella's Combat Mission Diary Cont. Jim, from Pittsburgh, PA, served as a 64th Gunner.

Mission # 1945

- 34 June 15 Ship 543. Target – Taichu A/D, Formosa. Time 9:25. Total – 267:35. Points – 3. Total – 77. Remarks – dropped 40-120 lb. frag. Clusters on Jap suicide craft to take tension off the boys at Okinawa. Bombs in tgt. 100%. Ack-Ack was heavy, accurate and concentrated. Two ships holed. 200 bursts.
- 35 June 18 Ship 768. Target – Kiirun town, Formosa. Time – 9:35. Total 277:10. Points – 3. Total – 80. Remarks – dropped 8-1000 lb. bombs right through the center of town. Ack-Ack heavy and concentrated and accurate, about 1000 bursts. 2 ships holed; one was ours.
- 36 June 20 Ship 975. Target – Shinchicku A/D, Formosa. Time – 10:00. Total – 287:10. Points – 3. Total – 83. Remarks – dropped 12 –500 lob. Frag. Clusters. Bombs in target 100%. Ack-Ack moderate and accurate about 40 bursts. Three ships holed. One was ours.
- 37 June 29 Ship 260. Target – Shinchicku, Formosa. Time – 10:00. Total – 297:10. Points – 3. Total – 86. Remarks – dropped 8-1000 lb. bombs. Over Tgt. 5 min. Bombed synthetic rubber factory – 100% hits. Target well camouflaged. Started large fires. Our ship got holed. Moderate Ack-Ack.

From Birch Strip, Ie Shima, Japan

- 38 July 24 Ship 384. Target – Shanghai, China. Time 9:05. Total – 306:15. Points – 2. Total – 88. Remarks – dropped 12-500 lb. frag. Clusters. Over tgt. 5 min. 100% hits on revetments. Very little Ack-Ack. Less resistance.
- 39 July 27 Ship 384. Target – Kure, Kyushu, Japan. [Ed. Note. Actually Honshu Island.] Time – 9:15. Total – 315:30. Points – 2. Total 90. Remarks – dropped 6-1000 lb. bombs, went after 2 aircraft carriers, target was clouded in so we bombed by Radar and got 1 hit. They were camouflaged and hard to hit. No Ack-Ack. No fighters.
- 40 July 31 Ship 494. Target – Nagasaki, Kyushu, Japan. Time – 8:30. Total – 324. Points 5 3/5. Total – 95 3/5. Remarks – dropped 4-2000 lb. bombs. Over target 5 min. Bombing 100% on docks. After leaving the target 3 MIG fighters came in on us and made passes. The third one I fired on. I think I hit [him] as his engine started to smoke. It's a probable but I'll never find out whether I got him or not. Heavy and accurate Ack-Ack. It was bouncing us all over the sky. The interception was a coordinated attack. I saw one seventh Air Force B-24 go down in flames.
- 41 Aug 01 Ship 543. Target – Nagasaki, Kyushu, Japan. Time 6:10. Total – 330:10. Points – 2 2/5. Total – 98. Remarks – dropped 8-1000 lb. bombs on shipping in docks and warehouses with 100% score. Over target 5 min. Ack-Ack heavy and accurate. We got three holes in our ship. One piece almost got me. A pretty close shave for me.
- 42 Aug 05 Ship 973. Target – Kagoshima, Kyushu, Japan. Time 7:25. Total – 337:35. Points 2½. Total 100½. Remarks – dropped 12-500 lb. incendiaries on the town. It was burned out. Smoke up to 12,000 ft. We left it a mass of flame. No fighters. Moderate Ack-Ack. I finished today – happy day.

Tour of Duty Ended.

Finis.

Jim Rodella provides the numbers of 14 Sqd. 64 B-24s that he flew in as well as the names of 11 of these.

Ship #	Name	Ship #	Name
028	<i>MICKIES MENACE</i>	256	<i>CHERRY</i>
262	<i>OKLAHOMA OUTLAW</i>	384	No name
428	<i>COCKTAIL HOUR</i>	429	<i>MICHIGAN</i>
430	<i>HIP PARADE</i>	494	No name
543	No name	768	<i>MILLION \$ BABY II</i>

Ship #	Name	Ship #	Name
853	<i>IT AIN'T SO FUNNY</i>	854	<i>MABEL'S LABELS</i>
865	<i>LAST HORIZON</i>	973	<i>THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL</i>

This concludes Jim's diary.

Another mission taken from the book, *MY LUCKY DICE*, by Paul Lincoln Nichols, 65th Copilot on the crew of Lt. Tom Scannell took place on October 28, 1944.

10-28-44 was another big day for us. We awoke at 2:30 A.M., ate breakfast and headed for the briefing room. The target for the day would be Port of Princess in the Philippines. The mission length would be over 12 hours. The target area was to be an airstrip and the advanced intelligence photographs indicated 68 enemy aircraft on the strip and several floatplanes in the water nearby. The Japanese had no combat planes larger than twin engine planes so we were able to reach them, but they up to now, were unable to reach us. The fact that we were now moving up and into the range of these planes made them a prime target. Still in our relatively sterile knowledge of the whole situation it seemed a long way to be flying this day.

Our plane and crew was to lead the 65th Bomb Squadron on this now worrisome, hellacious mission. We knew it was too far for much, if any, fighter coverage for us. To say that we were keyed up would be putting it mildly.

After our briefing the trucks took us to the planes. As per my normal procedure a walk around the plane was performed which made sure that things like all inspection ports were closed, tires weren't about to blow, that the wheel shocks (which kept the plane from rolling) were in place and a thing called a pitot tube cover [was removed], which if left on the external pitot tube, can prevent the air speed indicator in the cockpit from reflecting the air speed when the plane gets under way. Yet, because insects liked to build nests in these small tubes, they had to be covered while the planes were on the ground. Needless to say, without the air speed indication, takeoff would be aborted. The air speed doesn't start to read until full throttle is applied.

The pilot compartment was entered through the forward bomb bay door which was always open when the B-24 was on the ground unless bad winds were anticipated. Our parachute was worn as a backpack. It was supposed to be worn at all times, but we had long since gotten careless and consequently worried about strapping on the backpack only when we were over the target or when weather or other cases of eminent danger existed. It seemed rather ridiculous to think that we in the cockpit would have time to leave the controls, walk back to the bomb bay and safely jump out of the plane when the plane was below 2000 feet so why strap it on then? If all engines quit above 2000 feet, which seldom happened, I guess we figured we could strap the backpack on and get out safely so why strap it on until it was needed? After all, it was always folded back and under our butt all the time we were in the air. For the most part we used our parachutes as a seat pillow. Think about it, we were better off in that condition than we are while flying today on a commercial flight in our beautiful jets. Once seated in the cockpit, with the pilot on the left and the co-pilot on the right (facing forward), the seat belts were then buckled and the engine starts would begin. The #3 engine was always started first because it contained the hydraulic pumps, critical to the brakes, prop pitch, flaps and landing gear operations. Without brakes of course the plane would tend to move forward, thus the need to keep shocks in place until hydraulic pressure was available. Electrical switches for each individual engine were then thrown to the "On" position and the throttle was moved forward together with the manifold pressure control. At this time the starter was hit and after several rotations of the propeller, the many spark plugs of the 1200 horsepower Pratt and Whitney engine came alive. Cowl flaps were then opened to help keep the engines cool on the ground. Air-cooled engines such as ours had a tendency to overheat on the ground at the temperatures encountered near the Equator where we were much of the time. Every precaution was taken to assure that they did not overheat on the ground. After starting the other three engines in a similar manner, the propeller pitch was checked on each

prop through its full range. The B-24 had a (car type) wheel with an in and out capability and it controlled the ailerons and the elevator. At our feet were pedals which moved in and out and controlled the rudders of the plane. There were dual controls for both the pilot and the co-pilot. Before takeoff these many controls were manipulated through their full movement to assure smooth operation. On the ground they had no affect on the movement of the airplane.

Since we were leading the squadron, we signaled for the ground crew to pull the chocks so that we could move forward to the downwind end of the takeoff strip. Here magnetos were checked. Flaps and cowls were set. Then full throttle and full manifold. We were on our way. Our bomb bays each had (5) 1000-pound bombs and in addition to all normal fuel tanks each plane had a full bomb bay tank to give us the added fuel we would need to complete this long mission. Behind us we would see the other five planes of the squadron fall in line. We were to be the only squadron on this mission. As usual, we spent six hours of flying without much action. On this mission we had the added anticipation of perhaps being blown out of the sky at the end of those first six hours. It was going to be hard to block out those 60+ enemy airplanes waiting for us up ahead. Tom and I traded piloting duties every half-hour. Our predetermined rendezvous point compass reading, our air speed and altitude were continuously monitored. Usually Tom and I would grab a snooze during our time away from the pilot's responsibility. Getting awakened at 2:30 A.M. was always too early. We learned to be light-hearted about combat but always dead serious about our responsibilities when in the cockpit. As we approached the rendezvous area, excitement was putting in a few butterflies.

Six slow bombers would be pretty easy pickings for the faster single and twin engine Japanese planes. We knew from Balikpapan that without fighter coverage we would be vulnerable and could really be in trouble. We were too far away from fighter bases to get any help from them. At the rendezvous point we quickly became a tight formation of six and headed for the target, about 10 flying minutes away. We hoped a quick drop would catch them by surprise to the point that they would not have time to get into the air before our bombs wiped out the airstrip. We felt like it was a matter of life and death that we hit the target and hit it with the straight in approach. Hank would sure earn his keep this day. Our (5) 1000-pound bombs hit perfectly and stopped any possible future use of the field for some time to come. No planes were in the air and we were happily unmolested during our bomb run. A report on the intercom from the back of the plane, indicated that all of the planes that were on the pre-mission photography were still on the ground. We were as elated as a bunch of high school kids after a winning ball game. Someone came on the intercom and suggested that we ought to take advantage of this situation and go down to ground level and show these Japanese what a four-engine bomber looked like and what it could do. Maybe even put a few holes in some of those planes on the ground. It sounded like a good idea. We broke radio silence and told the other five planes of our formation what our plans were. They could break for home or follow us whichever they wanted to do. We headed for the deck.

Our first pass was at about 200 feet, with the planes that followed dropping down to tree top level when they saw that were not blown out of the air. Our second pass was also at tree top level. During both passes our plane felt like it was jumping through the air. If we had been hit from the ground fire, we were not aware of it, as the noise was deafening. We must have put holes in 80% of the planes that were on the field. One in particular was a seaplane, sitting vulnerable in the water at the end of the strip. As we made a sharp, right turn away from the far end of the field, I could look down and see the water boiling as our 50 caliber machine gun bullets found their home. The seaplane was clearly hit many times but we didn't stick around long enough to see if it sank or blew up. Since fuel was dear this far from home, we took our heading for home without gaining much more than 2500 feet of our original 10,000 feet of altitude. We could very well have been in trouble for our little extracurricular activity - not only at squadron headquarters, but also by using more fuel than was planned over the target. We would soon see. No hits appeared to have made on our plane. We all felt invincible. When we landed back at

Owi we still had several gallons of gas left. All planes landed safely. We were weakly chastised for our offbeat decision, but we were also the talk of the squadron and perhaps the group as well.

Thinking back on it now, I realize we were just a bunch of damned lucky fools, but good damned fools! We wondered, as a crew, if we would ever be allowed to lead the squadron again. It would be a while.

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

A couple whose passion had waned saw a marriage counselor and went through a number of appointments that brought little success. Suddenly at one session the counselor grabbed the wife and kissed her passionately.

"There" he said to the husband. "That's what she needs Monday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday." "Well," replied the husband, "I can bring her in on Mondays and Wednesdays, but Saturdays and Sundays are my golf days."

Only in America

Joe Smith started the day early, having set his alarm clock (made in Japan) for 6:00 A.M.

While his coffeepot (made in China) was perking, he shaved with his electric razor (made in Hong Kong).

He put on a dress shirt (made in Sri Lanka), designer jeans (made in Singapore) and tennis shoes (made in Korea).

After cooking his breakfast in his new electric skillet (made in India), he sat down with his calculator (made in Mexico) to see how much he could spend today.

After setting his watch (made in Taiwan), to the radio (made in India), he got in his car (made in Germany) and continued his search for a good-paying American job.

At the end of yet another discouraging and fruitless day, Joe decided to relax for awhile.

He put on his sandals (made in Brazil), poured himself a glass of wine (made in France), and turned on his TV (made in Indonesia), then wondered why he couldn't find a good-paying job in AMERICA.

A dietitian was once addressing a large audience in Chicago.

"The material we put in our stomachs is enough to have killed most of us sitting here, years ago. Red meat is awful. Soft drinks erode your stomach lining. Chinese food is loaded with MSG. Mexican food is too spicy. Vegetables can be disastrous, and none of us realizes the long term harm caused by germs in our drinking water or from alcohol.

But there is one thing that is the most dangerous of all and most of us have or will eat it. Can anyone here tell me what food it is that causes the most grief and suffering for years after eating it?"

A 75 year old man in the front row stood up and said, -----"Wedding cake."

Respectively Submitted – Jim Cherkauer, Secretary/Editor

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

BRING YOUR NAMETAG WITH YOU TO THE REUNION.

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

The Newsletter is published 4 times each year – January, April, July and October. If you have any news that you want in the Newsletter, please have it in the editor's hands absolutely no later than the 15th of the month before publication. Late arriving material will be included in the following Newsletter. **PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY. AVOID SENDING MATERIAL AT THE LAST MINUTE IF YOU CAN SEND IT EARLIER- PLEASE.**

Dues (\$15 Per Year or \$100 Life) may be sent directly to BILL WILSON, Treasurer, or to JIM CHERKAUER, Secretary. (Addresses are at the beginning of the Newsletter.) Make the check out to **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 <cherrj@buffnet.net>. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND ATTACHMENTS YOU DID NOT CREATE. TO AVOID DOWNLOADING A VIRUS, THE EDITOR DOES NOT OPEN ATTACHMENTS THAT DO NOT ORIGINATE WITH THE SENDER.**

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