



43RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION, INC.
"KEN'S MEN"
NEWSLETTER 80th EDITION
OCTOBER 2001



<u>PRESIDENT</u> MAX M. AXELSEN 8406 Dorsetshire St. San Antonio, TX 78250-2414 210-681-4581	<u>VICE PRESIDENT</u> ROGER G. KETTLESON 109 Huntley Road Las Vegas, NV 89145-5155 702-363-2824	<u>TREASURER</u> WILLIAM H. WILSON, Jr. P.O. Drawer M-360 Snyder, TX 79550-0360 915-573-6351	<u>SECRETARY</u> JIM CHERKAUER 114 Thorncliff Rd. Kenmore, NY 14223-1216 716-875-4346
--	---	--	---

Web site: www.kensmen.com

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

I hope y'all are looking forward to our reunion at Nashville, just a couple of weeks from now. It should be a beautiful time of year to convene for our 21st get together. Nashville is most convenient to many of our mid-westerners that make up a great part of our membership. Therefore, we hope to see a great turnout. Our hosts, **Bethel & Bonzella Ray**, have done a great job in arranging programs that all of us should enjoy. Nashville, the music capital of America, has entertainment for the likes of most everyone. Most of us will have ample opportunities to take advantage of tours, or other interests we may have. If you have failed to register, there's usually extra space at the hotel, and for your participation in our programs. So, get with it, and plan to be with us! Our membership numbers are decreasing, but we pleasure in living in "the spirit of the 43rd" that has existed over the years. So, should you be without a spouse, you're still a part of this family of the 43rd... and most welcome...always. We also encourage friends and family to be with us. Our annual affair allows us to renew friendships and to discuss issues of importance to our organization. Your input is most important, so come and express your interests.

I leave the presidency of our organization 31 Dec. of this year, and Roger Kettleson will then become our president. I'm confident that Roger, the other officers, and our board of directors will serve us well. I've had great support from Bill Wilson, Roger K., and from Jim Cherkauer, our secretary/editor, and our board members. Jim Cherkauer has done a magnificent job and I'm pleased to know that Howard Anderson has volunteered to succeed Jim. In my view, the sec./editor position is of the most importance to our organization. I'm confident that Howard will do a fine job. Thanks, Howard, for coming "aboard."

It has been a pleasure to have served as your president the last two years. Thanks for that privilege! God bless all of you good folks! SEE YOU AT NASHVILLE!!

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
43rd BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ASSOC.

2001

<u>SQD.</u>	<u>DIRECTOR</u>	<u>TERM EXPIRATION</u>	<u>SQD.</u>	<u>DIRECTOR</u>	<u>TERM EXPIRATION</u>
63 rd	Roland T. Fisher	(2003)	64 th	Joseph R. Jancosko	(2002)
63 rd	Charles "Chuck" Rauch	(2001)	64 th	Steve W. Blount III	(2003)
65 th	Eldon E. "Bud" Lawson	(2002)	403 rd	Joe Snyder	(2002)
65 th	L. C. "Chalky" White	(2001)	403 rd	Arthur G. Durbeck	(2003)
Headquarters James T. Pettus		(2001)			

The Secretary is to notify the squadrons whenever a director's term is about to expire. Each squadron with an expiring directorship is to hold an election at the annual meeting to fill the vacancy. Directors' terms are for three (3) years. This will serve as that official notice to each squadron for 2001: Charles Rauch, 63rd; L. C. White, 65th; and Headquarters Squadron for the late James Pettus.

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

Editorial. It was nearly 60 years ago when evil forces struck a devastating blow to America with the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor - a day that President Franklin D. Roosevelt called a "Day of Infamy."

As the editor was gathering the last information for this edition of our Newsletter, another sneak attack by evil forces hit America and all of the free world with attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The editor is sure that many of you men feel as you did on December 7, 1941. You would like to volunteer and fight this enemy to the bitter end. Although we are there in spirit we must admit that we are a bit too old to take an active role in fighting this cowardly and illusive enemy. But we can all pitch in and give aid to the families of those who lost their lives in the immense tragedy. We must support our President and be patient as those who are directing this war against terrorists plan our attack to bring these evil persons to justice. We must be ever alert, as there are still many living among us who would destroy this nation, as they can not understand freedom and a democratic society.

The true American spirit was shown by those heroes who went to the rescue of others at the cost of their own lives. Our television coverage has shown us how those firemen and policemen in NYC braved overwhelming odds against them to try to save others. The cost in lives is great and as yet not known. We must not forget these men and women and all those civilians who lost their lives as well as all of the families left behind by these victims of evil. We must avenge their sacrifices.

GOD BLESS AMERICA!

Don't forget our 2001 reunion in Nashville, TN, this year from October 28th - November 4th at the Radisson Hotel at Opryland. Our hostess and host are **Bonzella** and **Bethel Ray**, 65th Flight Engineer from Arrington, TN. All of the necessary forms for registration and participation are at the end of this Newsletter. **PLEASE NOTE ON THE PROGRAM PAGE THE ADDITIONAL HOURS FOR REGISTRATION** not listed on the previous Program Page. By the time that you receive this the deadline for hotel reservations at the reduced rates will have expired. We hope to see many of you there this year.

As of September 9th, **Bethel** reports that there were 120 registered for the reunion. As of August 31st, 12 have indicated they would play golf, 5 will play bridge, but only one has signed up for tennis. That person needs some competition so you tennis players please sign up when you register. He also reports that metro buses will run from the Opryland area to downtown until 10 p.m. or 10:30 p.m.

It is time to mark your calendars for the 2002 reunion. **Audrey** and our Vice President and 64th Pilot **Roger G. Kettleson**, our hostess and host for the 2002 reunion in Las Vegas, have announced that the reunion will be held in downtown Las Vegas at the Golden Nugget from 22nd September through 26th September 2002. Room rates have been established at \$69 per night plus tax which brings them to \$75 per night. The registration fees have not as yet been determined.

This late but sad news arrived from **Willie Pettus**, son of the late **James T. Pettus** our CO during the B-24 era of the 43rd. "I am sorry to have to tell you that **Betty Pettus (Jim's widow)** died tragically in a car accident today in Virginia, near the nursing home in Orange where she lived. She is missed by all who loved her. She died 6 months to the day after **Jim** passed away from cancer on March 10." Our deepest sympathy is extended to her family from all in the 43rd.

General Paul W. Tibbets, Jr. has accepted the invitation of his personal friend and current president of the 90th BG Assoc., James A. McMurria, to address those attending their National Reunion in Greenville, SC, from Aug. 29th to Sep. 2, 2001. Gen. Tibbets will speak of his experiences in WWII and specifically of his piloting the *Enola Gay* from which the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. At the time he was a colonel and commander of the 509th Composite Group based on Tinian Island. Gen. Tibbets is scheduled to speak on Sat. September 1, at 1:30 PM.

Late news for the July Newsletter was the notice of the death of **Henry J. Bartnick**, 65th Nose Gunner from Brockport, NY. **Arnold Huskins**, 65th Bombardier from Pittsfield, MA, included information about **Henry** in his letter reporting this sad news. As promised that information is now being reported to you.

Henry served on the crew of the late **Glen Bales**, 65th Pilot from Springfield, TN. He is survived by 4 children, 9 grandchildren and one great-grandson. He was 79 years young at the time of his death.

Although **Henry** lived a long ways from **Arnold**, they remained good friend all of these years and kept in touch by telephone. **Arnold** says that **Henry** had been ill and blind for several years but was cared for by his daughter **Michele**. He was happy and proud to have been one of Ken's Men. Do not worry **Arnold**; **Michele** is on our mailing list for the October Newsletter.

Henry was interred on August 4th with a military funeral and a plaque from the Veterans Association.

He was married on June 12, 1943. His wife, **Geraldine**, passed away shortly after their 50th wedding anniversary.

Michele mailed to **Arnold** a small pamphlet that **Henry** had kept these many years. It is quoted in its entirety below.

"KEN'S MEN"

1943

5th AIR FORCE

43rd BOMB GROUP

65th SQUADRON

They were a terrific bunch of kids – "Ken's Kids" they were called because they were thought of as General Kenny's favorites. They were young in years – sharing the deepest of a man's responsibilities – that of defending man's freedom from those who would destroy it. Like "Kids" they thought nothing bad would happen to them as they would line up on the runway and take off into the night with thirty-five tons of 1939-vintage airplane, high-octane gasoline, ammunition, bombs and other "kids" going out to destroy enemy ships and aircraft – that same enemy that would shoot back trying to destroy them. "Kids" have a mind-set of thinking they will live forever and that allows them to fly deliberately into the teeth of death and tell funny stories about it, before and after.

The 43rd was a collection of young spirits who shared the discomfort, the rigors and the risks of carrying out a war against a fanatic enemy in the brutal and dangerous environment of the South West Pacific. For [nearly] four years the 43rd waged an aerial war over a huge battlefield from Mareeba, Australia through the savage weather and terrain of New Britain, New Guinea, Halmahera, the Celebes, Borneo, the Philippines, the Ryukus to Japan – some six thousand miles. They were a major part of a force that drove a plundering, marauding enemy back to where it began and made it surrender.

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

The years went by and things began to change – the “kids” did not change, but the “machinery” they inhabited began sending out signals that it could not support the mission plan as well as it once did. It grew more evident as the years passed. Since the “kids” of the 43rd first started their long, risky journey to drive the enemy back, nearly sixty years have passed. Some move more slowly now – some do not see as well – and some need hearing devices.

But look closely into each lined face – there is in each eye a twinkle of youth. Looking into each one's eyes you can see peering out – young eagles. The long-ago warriors are still young men within aging shells. They have youthful pride in what they did so long ago. There is gladness at having survived – and sorrow for those who did not. When they talk, you can hear the roar of engines, see the red streaks of anti-aircraft fire, hear excited chatter over the intercom calling out enemy fighters, and feel the crump of exploding bombs below, feeling the intensity they felt when plunging an airplane into battle.

Those of the 43rd are “KEN'S OLD MEN” now. Their hair is white. Their faces bear lines. Their hands are stiff. Their walk is slow. They sense that they are looked at by younger generations as old – perhaps of no use. But THEY know that THEY all feel just as strong and fulfilled now as they did when, as kids, they accomplished what later generations can only dream of achieving. In their minds, they are still the young men who fought those battles so long ago so that their children and their grandchildren can live and love and pursue happiness in a land kept free by the old “warriors” . . .

Charles F. McClenny, Sr., 64th Flight Engineer from Dallas, TX, writes to say that many history books claim that the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, were the most important events that took place in the 20th century. **Charles** writes that many of the men of the 43rd did see the atomic bomb explode over Nagasaki. As Flight Engineer on the **Cooper – Daupert** crew he was on a mission to Iwakuni, Kyushu, Japan, that August 9th 1945 and was fortunate enough to see the bomb go off and watch the “Mushroom Cloud.”

“Most of you know how ‘smooth’ the mission to Hiroshima was on the B-29 *ENOLA GAY* but you do not know the problems that confronted *BOCK'S CAR* - the B-29 that dropped the atomic bomb on Nagasaki.” A friend of **Charles**, Fred J. Olivi copilot on that mission in *BOCK'S CAR*, has written a book about that mission to Nagasaki. It is entitled *DECISION AT NAGASAKI: The Mission That Almost Failed*. This book may be purchased directly from the author who will autograph the book upon request. The cost is \$22.00 including S&H. Send your request to **Fred J. Olivi, 2535 West 117th St., Chicago, IL 60655**.

Charles included a color photo of the cover of the book. It shows a B-29 flying over a bank of broken cumulus nimbus clouds.

The 19th Bomb Group Association will hold its annual reunion in Atlanta, GA, on October 31-November 4, 2001. The 19th will be inducted into the American Combat Airman's Hall of Fame at a black tie banquet in the CAF hangar in Midland, TX, on Friday, October 5th. The 19th will then be the only unit inductee to this Hall of Fame. Among the individuals to be inducted at that ceremony is George H. W. Bush the former President of the United States of America.

The July 2001, No. 203 Newsletter of the 22nd Bomb Group reminds its readers that their 52nd annual reunion takes place in Orlando, FL, at the Guest House Hotel, 7900 Orange Blossom Trail from 10-31-01 to 11-04-01. In a report of the status of their history book, it is indicated that their contract with **Lawrence J. Hickey** to write their history expired on May 31, 2001. They are still working with **Larry** but not under contract as they own all rights to the book at this time. The newsletter informs the members not to expect the publication of their history this year. **Don Evans**, their Legal Advisor, is working with **Larry** to assemble a photo book of about 500 photos to supplement the two volumes of the unedited history by Walt Gaylor that they published earlier this year. This they expect to have published before the end of this year. At the time this newsletter was being prepared for press the supplement was progressing quite well and **Don** says that it may still be possible to have the supplement printed and mailed to the members before this year's reunion in late October and early November.

One day in late June the editor received two mailings, one via e-mail and the other via the US Postal System, that dealt with the same topic. **Roger E. Vargas**, 63rd Navigator from Riverside, CA, informed that editor that in March he had received the book, *The B-17 Flying Fortress in the Pacific*, and had read it. He enjoyed the book and found it a good history of the war in the Pacific from 7 Dec. '41 through 1943. He indicates in that era the B-17 was the mainstay of the "Army Air Corps" in Hawaii, the Philippines, Java/Borneo (now Indonesia), the South West Pacific and the South Pacific.

Roger was a part of a group that came from the 6th AAF in Panama to Australia in 1942. "We formed the 63rd Bomb Sqdn. Of which I was a member until April 1943."

He feels that even though this book covers only the B-17 era of the war against Japan it would be interesting reading to others from the 43rd who were not in that era. The book lists all of the B-17s assigned to the Pacific area. Of these 47 were B-17 F models and most were assigned to the 43rd.

This book may be purchased directly from the author, Gene Eric Salecker, 2526 N. Davisson St., River Grove, IL 60171-1710 for \$30.00 including S&H.

Roger writes that God willing he will see you in Nashville.

Our President, **Max Axelsen** 403rd Pilot from San Antonio, TX, writes that **Lloyd "Breezy" Boren**, 65th Bombardier who flew all of his missions in a B-17, loaned **Max** his copy of this book and he says that it covers the 19th and 43rd Groups quite thoroughly. "The B-17 gents would enjoy this history."

The International B-24 Liberator Club has a 2002 calendar for sale at the price of \$10.00 plus \$2.50 for S&H. It is in black and white. Each page has 3 photos pertaining to B-24s such as crews, maintenance at work, particular aircraft, etc, as well as historical information. If you are interested in ordering one of these, the address is **1672 Main Street, Suite E, PMB-124, Ramona CA 92065**. Mention that you are a member of the 43rd BG Assoc., as our treasury will be reimbursed \$0.50 for each calendar sold to anyone mentioning our association. The back page lists every group (all countries and all services) and other type organizations that flew B-24s or other versions of this plane from WWII to the present.

Via e-mail **Lewis H. Daws**, 65th Crew Chief/Flight Chief from Rialto, CA, tells that he received the book by Gene Eric Salecker also. He refers to it as *Fortress Against the Sun*. The editor assumes that this is the subtitle. He indicates that it is a 464-page volume, but the print is so small he has to use a magnifying glass to read it. He had not as yet read the book in its entirety.

Lew says that several WWII aircraft have been in his area early this summer. A B-17G came to the Rialto airport. He indicates that this particular plane had never been in combat but had been used for cargo and fire fighting. It was fitted out for seven passengers. The cost of a flight was \$375. It is owned by Experiential Aircraft. A B-17 and B-24 came to the Norton ADB, but he did not get to see it. [Editor's note. These were probably Collings Foundation aircraft.] **Lew** mentions that an LB-30 landed at another nearby field. [The only one flying is the Confederate Air Force's *Diamond Lil*.]

In the July Newsletter, page 4, the editor reported that **Lew** was driving the tractor towing the B-36 that killed a maintenance worker. This was incorrect. He was not driving that tractor. [The editor apologizes for making that error.]

In additional e-mail **Lew** writes of a 65th aircraft named *THE LOOSE GOOSE*. He says that this was one of his airplanes. Piloted by Capt. **Crawford** the B-17L 41-2609 *THE LOOSE GOOSE* was the plane that first spotted the Japanese convoy that led to the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. **Lew** had not been aware of this fact until he read the recent book cited above. On the second day of the battle, *THE LOOSE GOOSE* returned with an engine out and despite frantic efforts to replace that engine as quickly as possible, it did not get back into the battle.

Lew recalls that it was Pilot **Josh Barrens** who flew that plane under the Sydney bridge. He was supposed to have been on that flight, but did not make it. After the squadron switched to B-24s, **Lew** was crew chief on several including one named *TWO BOB TILLIE*. He has a photo of this plane. The editor hopes he will send him a copy.

On Veterans Day Pres. George W. Bush signed into law the act to permit the construction of the WWII Memorial in Washington, DC, on the mall separating the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. There has been a good deal of controversy regarding this site. Most of the negative reaction is based on total ignorance or deliberate misstatements about the proposal and how it was developed. A general contractor has been selected and construction should have been started by the end of July (after this was written). If any of you want to follow the progress of this memorial and the history behind its development into a proposal enacted into law, you may go to the following URL.

<http://www.wwiimemorial.com/>. The story there is fascinating and very informative.

Our very capable treasurer and past president of this association, **William H. "Bill" Wilson, Jr.**, 65th Pilot from Snyder, TX, received a letter from Gen. Fred E. Woerner, USA (Ret) dated May 7, 2001. In the letter the general informs our association, a Charter Member of the National World War II Memorial, that the construction of the National World War II Memorial has been delayed indefinitely pending the resolution of a lawsuit and a procedural issue involving the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). This lawsuit was filed by "... a small opposition group." He tells of a hearing scheduled for June 14, 2001. The editor reports that this hearing was cancelled.

Gen. Woerner urges that we contact the NCPC and ask it to ratify its previous approvals. This can be e-mailed to infor@ncpc.gov or mailed to:

Richard L. Friedman, Chairman, National Capital Planning Commission, 401 9th Street, NW, North Lobby, Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20576.

The editor is not certain whether this action by the President overrides the lawsuit brought by a group opposing the location of this memorial. Upon reading all of the information he could find on the Internet, he has inferred that the lawsuit may be a dead issue. It seems that the dissident group ignored what actually took place and proceeded as though the planning commission had not held hearings, etc. even though it had followed the proper procedure in determining the site of the memorial. But the editor does not actually know the status of this lawsuit. From the information posted on the URL cited above, it seems that the construction is going ahead regardless. We don't need any further delays to the construction and dedication of a monument to those many men and women who were in WWII including those who died for our country and those who have died since. A visit to that URL will definitely show anyone that the proposed memorial will in no way detract from the present layout and should improve the area considerably. Currently the area is a flood plain and the proposed memorial will have huge pumps and runoff facilities to keep the area from flooding.

On July 7th the editor received a phone call from **Larry E. Main**, 65th pilot from Tulalake, CA. He was inquiring about any policy that our association might have about prorating expenses for those guests that come for only one or two events at our reunion. In particular, a number of his family are arriving

for the Saturday night banquet/dance, and he was interested in knowing if he had to pay a registration fee for each of them or could he pay just for that meal. This is an interesting question for which the editor had no answer. The editor referred him to our gracious hosts **Bonzella** and **Bethel Ray** from Arrington, TN. Now the editor will have to find out the answer to that question.

Very sad news came via e-mail from **M. L. Shaddox**, 64th Pilot from Friendswood, TX. **Naomi** lost her courageous battle with cancer on June 8, 2001. They had been married for 54 years. "Naomi was the light of my life and I loved (correction) love her dearly. She died with dignity and surrounded by friends."

Shad underwent long postponed surgery a few weeks after the passing of **Naomi**. In July he was recuperating at the home of his son, Keith, in Parker, CO. Keith's e-mail address is **keithl.shaddox2@home.com**. By the time this Newsletter reaches you, **Shad** may be back in Texas, but he would like to hear from his friends.

Burt Aden, 403rd Radio Operator from Omaha, NE, has sent in a change of address. He has been in Florida for a spell and requested that a July Newsletter be mailed to him as the Postal System does not forward newsletters. His new address is **6117 S. 116th Street, Omaha, NE 68137-5716**.

More sad news arrived from **Lorraine G. Stewart** of Ridge, NY. She reported the death of her husband, **Charles D. Stewart** from the 65th Sqd. on April 14, 2001. **Charlie** had a brief stay in the hospital where he died of internal bleeding despite 11 transfusions. "He had the opportunity to see all of his family and grandchildren, nieces and nephews during the few days he was in the hospital, and Jamie, Sharon and I were with him at the end. He is at peace now, and out of pain and for that we are all grateful."

Lorraine writes that **Charlie** always felt that he grew up while serving in the 65th. He "celebrated" his 19th, 20th and 21st birthdays while stationed in the jungles. He looked forward to the reunions of the 43rd and attended most until 3 or 4 years ago.

He had asked that he be buried in his military uniform that he had saved these many years. In the casket were a 43rd cap, a small bottle of Chivas Regal, a can of Bud, a pack of cigarettes and two bags of peanuts even though he had not had a beer or a smoke for many years.

Lorraine says that there was no eulogy as that was not his style, but she did manage to read the following poem.

It's funny when you think of it,
The way we got along.
We'd come from different worlds, to live
in one, no one belongs.
I didn't even like them all.
I'm sure they would all agree.
Yet I would give my life for them.
I hope some died for me.
So bury me with soldiers please
Though much maligned they be.
Yes, bury me with soldiers,
For I miss their company.
We'll not soon see their likes again.
We've had our fill of war.
But bury me, with men like these
Till someone else does more.

Charlie was laid to rest at Calverton National Cemetery and his flag was donated to the Avenue of Flags.

Lorraine wishes to continue as an associate member of the 43rd Association. That honor is bestowed on all surviving widows, **Lorraine**. Your name will be placed on our mailing list.

Theodore "Ted" Romanowski, 403rd Armorer/Gunner from Whiting, NJ, sent **Bill** a check for his dues through 2003 along with a couple of photographs. The black and white photo was taken of his crew standing before a B-24 named *GERALDINE*. Where or when the photo was taken, he does not state. He was not able to identify everyone in the picture since only 6 of the men were from his original crew of **L. A. Young**. The other 4 men, including the pilot, had just joined the crew. (Photo below.) Their original crew was broken up when the pilot, **L. A. Young**, moved to Group Headquarters, the radio operator and assistant radio operator were killed and the navigator was shipped out due to incompetence.

The second photo is one taken recently of the Collings Foundation's B-24 J *THE DRAGON AND HIS TAIL*. **TED** is standing by the nose art with the lovely Caroline Lindgren, copilot from Sweden. She flies for a commercial airline and does promotion work by flying the B-24. He took this photo at nearby Miller Air Park in New Jersey.

Ted writes that he has been enjoying the dairies of some of our men as featured in our Newsletter. He says that it brings back memories of his time in the 43rd from 1943-1944. The most vivid memory he has is of the first daylight raid on Rabaul Harbor. Another mission that he recalls clearly is his first mission – a night raid on Rabaul. Seeing all of the searchlights and tracers coming at the plane was scary.

B-24 CREW IN NEW GUINEA



Standing left to right: Gunner Thompson; Armorer/Gunner Romanowski; Radio Operator unknown; Engineer Townsend; Asst. Radio Operator unknown; Asst. Eng. Stafford.
Kneeling left to right: Pilot unknown, Copilot Hazel; Bombardier Winrow; Navigator unknown.

Early in June the editor received a phone call from a Mrs. **Ross** whose husband is a member of our association. Unfortunately, the editor did not record her first name and when he referred to our Roster, he discovered that there are two men listed with the surname Ross. She wanted to report the death of **Edmond L. Troccia**, 65th Intelligence from Poughkeepsie, NY. He is survived by his wife, **Johanna**.

Ed was the first member of this association that he met when he and his wife attended their first reunion in Norfolk in 1991. He spotted us entering the hotel from the parking ramp and greeted us and made us feel right at home. He sensed that it was our first reunion.

Johanna has a change in area code for her phone. It is now **895-462-3483**.

In memory of her late husband, **Johanna** has donated a substantial monetary gift to the 43rd Association to be used where needed.

She writes, "It is with sadness that I must notify the organization of the death of my husband, ... on the 18th April 2001. He had been in critical condition since mid January, in & out of hospital several times with pneumonia, plus other complications."

"We as a family, have enjoyed our association with the 43rd – the newsletters and the many reunions we were able to attend. He missed the latter the most, renewing friendships. We hope the newsletters will continue, keeping us up to date on so many we know."

Our President, **Max Axelsen**, has written **Johanna** to thank her for this gift and point out that **Ed** was among the Greatest Generation as Tom Brokaw has called the WWII generation.

Sad news of the death of **Joseph "Joe" Shapuras**, 65th from Largo, FL, comes from his widow, **Eleanor**. Along with an obit **Eleanor** wrote that **Joe** enjoyed being a member of the 43rd BG Association. He read the Newsletter from cover to cover and looked for the names of men with whom he served. Whenever he found anything on one of those men, it was the highlight of his day. **Joe** saved all of the newsletters and his military records. These now are in the hands of their youngest son who is also an historian. "... So all is not lost."

Eleanor says, "You and the group will always be in our hearts."

E-mail from Associate member **Shirley J. Nelson** of Fort Wayne, IN, arrived to request page 8 of the July Newsletter. Her page was a blank. With the speed of the Internet, the editor was able to send her this page shortly after receiving her request. **Shirley** is the sister of the late **Charles Straw**, a former 43rd Pilot.

She was saddened to read of the death of **Harry Stevenson**, 64th Pilot from San Diego, CA. Her daughter from Palm Springs, CA, had corresponded with him and had hoped to visit him.

Shirley thanks the staff "... for keeping the 43rd in history forefront!"

Including a letter with his 2002 dues **Lotus H. Fultz**, 63rd Turret Gunner from Madison, IN, writes that he and his wife are "... contemplating the sojourn to Nashville for the end of October. There are so many things to do and so little time in which to do it. Then I'll have to go on a fasting spree. We'll have to put her credit card on ice. My wife believes in keeping our money in circulation. She says it's good for the economy. She just loves to help people."

Lotus says that the picture of the B-32 in the July Newsletter reminded him of the Navy PB4Y-2 Privateer with the tall tail fin.

He did enjoy the story of the dogfight between the Naval Observation plane and the Chinese fighter.

He also points out, as so many of you have in the past, that the last official bombing mission of WWII was flown from Ie Shima by the 63rd. This story appeared in a recent Newsletter.

Lotus finds it strange "... that no one has ever mentioned the night that we were listening to the public address system carrying the conversations of the P-38 pilots who were patrolling the Ie Shima outer perimeter. Each had a sector of about thirty-six miles. All at once one pilot sings out 'Bandit-Bandit...I have him in my sights' ... then, 'Get off my tail cowboy. This plane is just like yours...' -

that meant that some seventy-five miles was not being patrolled. Then a big roly-poly Betty trundled across the Ie Shima sky. There were searchlights everywhere; the Betty stood out like a black P-63 on a white tarmac. Still it groped and probed its way forward amid a blanket of gunfire from American gun emplacements. The Mitsubishi meatball made spaghetti out of the parked P-38s and P-63s. Amid the self-same American fusillade and barrage with the scintillating searchlight capturing every move the fat Betty disappeared in the darkness of the outer perimeter."

He says that although this incident occurred following the August 6th Hiroshima affair, it was not a mandated retaliation for the first Atomic Bomb.

[This has not been mentioned before while this editor was in charge of our Newsletter. Although the editor was on Ie Shima at that time, he never heard of the incident or can't recall it after this long period of time.]

Lotus includes his e-mail address as **Flannelmouth@webtv.net**.

Experiencing a "senior moment" **Joubert S. McCrea, Jr.**, 65th Pilot from Alexandria, VA, enclosed a check for dues for three plus years in his letter to the editor.

He writes that he appreciates the Newsletter. Although he says that he was a pilot in the 65th for only a short period of time – April '45 – Nov. '45, every edition of the newsletter seems to contain something that he no longer remembers or was not aware of at the time. [Do you recall the editor, **Joubert**? He recalls you.] He has not read any mention of "... our flights to CLARK, carrying released Australian POWs toward their home, in the bomb bay seated on makeshift flooring. It must have been very drafty!! I think the effort was in September 1945." [The editor flew 10 Dutch and Dutch East Indies ex POWs from Yonton, Okinawa, to Nichols Field, Luzon, on Sep. 9, 1945. He and his 5-man crew stayed at Clark Field for two nights due to weather and returned to Ie Shima on the 11th. He refused to let anyone ride in the bomb bay as those racks were simply too flimsy to be considered safe to carry a human cargo.]

Joubert reflects on the loss of our gallant leader, **James T. Pettus**, CO and pilot from Honolulu, HI. He writes that although he did not know **Jim** personally, he recalled "... his reputation of deserved respect while I served in the 43rd Group." "On Clark one day, I was sent on local flight for gunnery practice offshore, at low level. Since we were already at low altitude, it seemed ok to join up with a C-47 seen shortly after takeoff, which we did on the way back to Clark. Upon returning to my tent after the mission, I was visited by "Operations," who suggested that if I wanted to fly low level formation on the wing of a C-47, it would be better to pick one other than the Group Commander's."

The story in the July Newsletter of the B-32 caused **Joubert** to recall his amazement when he watched a B-32 back up to park on the ramp. That was shortly before our Group moved to Ie Shima.

John H. Pickering, 64th Pilot from Punta Gorda, FL, says that he was happy to see the item about **Fred Wesche**, 64th Pilot from Westfield, NJ, in the July Newsletter. **John** writes that he has a picture of **Fred** and him giving candy to cannibal children at a New Guinea village near the 64th camp. He says that this is one photo he did not send to **Lawrence J. Hickey**, Associate member and military author from Bolder, CO. Apparently he sent a significant part of his extensive file to **Larry** and it has never been returned. He unfortunately did not make a duplicate of that file before sending it to **Larry**.

John hopes to make the Nashville reunion this year – God willing.

He also has been in close contact with Al Young for over 40 years. Al was chief inspector and **John** was supervisor at the "Worlds largest and best 'H' Bomb Plant." Al has been mentioned in our newsletters in the past. He was at Clark Field, Luzon, in the 19th Bomb Group when the war broke out. He witnessed the shooting down of Capt. Colin Kelly's B-17 as it was approaching Clark for a landing after a mission against the Japanese fleet near Lingayen Gulf. Some of you may recall that the bombardier on Kelly's plane was the much decorated late **Meyer Levin** who eventually served a tour or two in the 64th Squadron of the 43rd Bomb Group. Capt. Kelly's crew had bailed out except one man who

had been killed by enemy guns. Kelly's chute failed to open according to the officially recorded history of the 19th Bomb Group.

Al was among those American military personnel who had evaded capture by the Japanese when they overran the Philippines, but was forced to surrender to the Japanese when the Americans surrendered at Corregidor. He served the rest of the war as a POW.

Meyer became a member of the crew on which **John** served as copilot. The pilot was **Mo Friedman**, another veteran from the Philippines. They served in the 93rd Squadron 19th Bomb Group. In November 1942, **Mo** received orders to take his entire crew with him to pick up a new B-17 at Charleville, Australia. After they checked out the B-17 called *CHIEF OF SEATTLE*, they were ordered to proceed to Fenton, Northern Territory. They had some difficulty finding the field, but finally located it and landed. Major **Bleasdale**, CO, and Capt. **Nelson**, Adjutant, and other 64th personnel welcomed them to their new squadron. The crewmembers were all a bit confused, as they had no idea how they were assigned to the 64th Squadron. Major **Bleasdale** had orders promoting **John** to 1st Lieutenant and gave **John** his own bars to be pinned **John**'s uniform. After being in camp for a couple of days the crew flew to Port Moresby, New Guinea, and flew two recco missions to the north of New Ireland. Another crew was sent on a third such mission. It never returned.

"**Mo** still was confused about being transferred to the 43rd inasmuch as he was a Philippine Vet. **Mo** and **Meyer** were to return to ZI." **Meyer** chose to stay with the 43rd. This story has been related in Newsletters about two years ago. To refresh your memories, **Meyer**, who later died in the ditching of a 64th B-17, left a son and only known descendant, Arthur Barrett Meyer Levin. It was through Al Young and Joy Meyer, that the editor had received this information now recalled by **John** in his letter to the editor.

About two years ago at an annual reunion of the 19th Bomb Group, **John** requested that they 19th make Arthur an Honorary Member of the Association. The suggestion has never been acted upon. So **John** is now making a similar request of the 43rd Bomb Group Association. [The editor relayed this request on to our President, **Max Axelsen**, who reports that this will be on the agenda of the Board at the Nashville reunion. He sees no reason why this request will not be honored.]

Arthur and Joy will be visiting in the U.S. in September. By the time you receive this they will have made their visit. They will be with Al Young and his wife in Utah first. Then they head to New York City to visit **Meyer Levin**'s know living relatives. After that they head to England to visit with Joy's kin before heading back to Australia.

John adds this very important postscript to his letter. He has been hired as a consultant, i.e., artist for the Time Warner HBO coming production of "Cawdy Bomber" a Berlin airlift story of the 1948-9 era. Congratulations, **John**!

Our recruitment officer, **Edward L. Gammill**, 63rd Crew/Flight Chief from Phoenix, AZ, is doing a fine job of finding men who served in the 43rd Bomb Group during and post WWII. A couple of new members are listed in the following two paragraphs. Their dues are being credited for the year 2002. Perhaps some of you will recall one or both of these men and contact him/them to welcome him/them to our association. The editor knows that **Ed** also has sent an application to a post WWII 43rd veteran, **Frank Sarrell**. **Russell Burnett**, 64th Flight Engineer from Conway, MA, phoned the editor to report that **Frank** of Tucson, AZ, had contacted him about joining our association. He is also a member of the 19th BG Assoc. and will be attending their reunion that occurs during the time of our Nashville reunion. This information was relayed via e-mail to **Ed**.

Samuel J. Grimaldi served as a Pilot in the 403rd Sqd. from March 1945 until November 1945. He served on the crew of **Art Humphrey**. The crew had completed 18 missions when the war ended. He stayed active in the reserves and the Michigan National Guard and retired as a Lt. Colonel in 1971.

His address and phone number are 1040 Cross St., Saginaw, MI 48602 and 989-755-2383.

Frederick A. Walch served in the 403rd Sqd. as a Navigator also on the crew of **Art Humphrey** from March 1945 to the end of the war. He completed 20 missions in that time. **Frederick** retired from Kodak in 1981.

His address is **4 Kingswood Drive, Rochester, NY 14624-3313**. His phone is **716-426-0351**.

Sad news comes from Mrs. **Cyrus Michaels** of Philadelphia, PA, who reports the death of her husband, **Cyrus Michaels** of Headquarters Squadron, on April 26, 2001. After a fall from a ladder he developed a brain tumor, but she reports that he did not suffer. Her letter was sent to **Max Axelsen** who wrote to her expressing sympathy from the Association and reminding her that **Cyrus** was also among that Greatest Generation who served their country well during WWII.

She thanks the association for the last Newsletter, but says it was a shame that **Cyrus** could not read it as he enjoyed knowing what was going on among those from the 43rd.

Resolving the problem of remembering to pay association dues each year, **Anna** and **Chet Danows** have sent **Bill Wilson**, our Treasurer, lifetime membership dues for **Chester B. "Danny" Danows**, 64th Top Gunner from Flat Rock, NC.

She writes that **Chet** has been working on a model B-24 kit and has the framing done. She says that she hopes he will finish the project when he is feeling better. He has been having a problem with his heart since 1996. Although it was not considered serious at the time, his condition has deteriorated somewhat since then and he is currently on oxygen. In 1998 a tumor was discovered in his left lung, but it has not changed any since then and is considered benign. In April of 2000 **Chet** was placed on oxygen, but in December 2000 he had open-heart surgery to replace a valve. He has been doing well since then, but remains on oxygen due to his emphysema. They both get around a good deal despite his condition but they are not able to make the reunions.

Chet served on the crew of **Arvid J. Houghum**, 64th Pilot from Grand View, TX. **Chet** and **Anna** send along greeting to all of the members of their crew and their spouses.

E-mail from **Jim Rodella**, 64th Gunner from Pittsburgh, PA, has alerted the editor to another new book related to WWII, *Gunner - An Illustrated History of World War II Aircraft Turrets and Gun Positions*. Donald Nijboer of Toronto, Canada authors it. Boston Mills Press publishes the book and the ISBN number is 1550463322.

Donald Nijboer located **Jim's** name and photo with his crew on the 43rd web site and contacted **Jim**. Donald interviewed **Jim** via the telephone. He sent **Jim** his thanks for helping him with his book. Nice going **Jim**. Some of you other gunners may find this book of interest too.

Enclosed with his check for his 2001-2002 dues, is a modest request by **John J. Holleran**, 64th Operations. He would like his January and April Newsletters mailed his Florida address and his July and October ones mailed to his Connecticut address. The latter is in our Roster but the former is not, so here it is. **6175 S. Mirror Lake Dr. Apt. 307, Sebastian, FL 32958**. [This request will be honored.]

From the change of address postcard from **William A. Smetts**, 63rd Pilot, it is obvious that he has two dwellings, one in Ohio and another in Florida. The 2000 Roster contained his Florida address but the editor was notified of a change to Ohio a few months ago. This postcard now lists the Florida address so it is assumed that **William** is an anti-snowbird who heads south in the colder months and north the rest of the year. Keep both addresses in your Roster.

Samuel F. Commons, immediate past president and 65th Flight Engineer from Flourtown, PA, sent the editor an excerpt from a new book on the B-24, *THE WILD BLUE: THE MEN AND BOYS WHO FLEW THE B-24s OVER GERMANY* by Stephen E. Ambrose who has written some 20 histories on

WWII. The September 2001 issue of *AMERICAN HERITAGE* pp. 40-46 carries this excerpt from that book. The book features the 35 missions made by George McGovern while piloting a B-24 in the 15th AAF out of Cerignola, Italy. On most of his flights he flew the *Dakota Queen* named in honor of his wife Eleanor. This is the George McGovern who served as a Senator from North Dakota and also ran unsuccessfully for president of our country. Ambrose also features in this book the Tuskegee African-American Airmen who were so successful with their P-38s in protecting those B-24s flying out of Italy. History records that not a single B-24 was shot down by a German fighter while these Tuskegee Airmen flew fighter cover for the bombers.

In addition **Sam** included a very favorable review of this book by Randy "Duke" Cunningham who serves California in the House of Representatives. He served as one of the most highly decorated Navy pilots in the Vietnam War.

A quick check on 'amazon.com' shows it is listed for \$18.20 plus S&H at their Internet store. It is published by Simon & Shuster and is dated Aug. 14, 2001, with an ISBN 6743203399.

Just a day after entering the paragraphs above a letter arrived from **Donald G. Rumsey**, 65th Navigator from Overland Park, KS. "Just finished reading 'Wild Blue' by Stephen Ambrose. It is about George McGovern but a good review of B-24 nostalgia."

"Understand he is doing a new book on 24s in the Pacific. I hope we have our oar in already since he is looking for data and stories - I'm told. The 90th will no doubt get the headlines but we should make the effort." [Ed. If true, this is surely something that we should look into and take action on.]

Donald enclosed his check for dues for the next two years.

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

E-mail from André Epstein indicates that he is seeking information concerning his father, S/Sgt. **Melvin Epstein**, who served in the 43rd from about 1943-1945. André writes that his father died of cancer at the age of 53, but left little information about his tour of duty with the family. He is interested in hearing from anyone who remembers his dad. In particular he would like to know what his dad's duty was while in the 43rd, etc. He wonders if anyone has information that would indicate that anyone in the group was exposed to radiation during his tour of duty in the 43rd.

You may contact André at 14 Fawn Glen Ct., Pittsburg, CA 94565. His phone number is 925-458-4257. His e-mail address is <maestro1234@home.com>.

An interesting story along with a copy of his WWII diary arrived in the mail from **Richard Bennett**, 65th Pilot from Fredericksburg, TX. He says that the diary has been a bit late in forthcoming as it was only recently that his daughter typed it for him. This editor will run much of that diary in this issue and the January issue of the Newsletter and hopes that the future editor will continue it to a conclusion.

Here is **Richard's** story. In the fall of 1942 he was being trained in B-26 *Martin Marauder* squadron in what was a highly secret operation at the U.S. Navy base at Eglin Field, Florida. After the successfully Doolittle raid of Tokyo with B-25s launched from an aircraft carrier, this squadron was trained to fly B-26s off aircraft carriers. They carried 2,000-pound torpedoes that hung below the bomb bay. "The strategic theory was that the longer range of the B-26 would enable our carrier ships to sink the Japanese fleet before their fighter planes could get within range of our ships." No one bothered to tell these men where they were supposed to land in the event they completed a successful attack on the Japanese fleet and could make it safely away from that fleet. The planes could not be landed on the deck of any aircraft carrier and they certainly would not be within flying distance of any land under U.S. control. The Doolittle raid with several B-25s called for those planes to land in China at bases held by friendly forces. The B-26s would be over vast stretches of the Pacific Ocean.

These crews were shipped to Australia where they found the AAF personnel in command of our bomber groups too occupied with the war they were waging against the Japanese through New Guinea to care about or even know about the "top secret" torpedo training of the new arrivals. Instead they

divided these crews up among different groups flying B-17s, B-24s or B-25s. Here is the first part of his diary.

Today is Feb. 12, 1943. – I am writing from Seven-Mile Strip, Port Moresby, New Guinea. An account of what happened since I left the States and of what is happening follows.

Dec. 26, 1942 – After staying at Hamilton Field, California, for over a week, we were told we would leave this evening for the "South Pacific." Through an error on someone's part, we had found out earlier in the week that we were going to Brisbane, Australia. We were not supposed to know this and neither was anyone else, so in order to keep any leaks from getting out we all agreed that we wouldn't write to our homes at all. I know I kept up my end of it and imagine the other fellows did too. About 6:00 p.m. this evening we weighed in at the Ferry Command with all our equipment. Each person was allowed to take 100 lbs. of baggage. As much of this consisted of combat equipment, we didn't have too much room for personal effects, and as my footlocker had not yet arrived from Fort Myers, Florida, I was caught a little short handed on certain articles of clothing, etc. At 8:20 p.m. we climbed into the airplane and at exactly 9:10 p.m. the wheels of our converted B-24 left the ground. Our lane circled up around the mountains and headed out to sea passing directly over the Golden Gate Bridge. Although all ready and eager to get overseas as fast as we could, we couldn't help but feel more than a little sad as we watched the lights of San Francisco fade out. At that time no words were said and I'm sure that every man's thoughts, as my own were, were back home. As the night went by and at the altitude we were flying, it became bitter cold. None of us had taken warm clothing with us so it wasn't long before we were all shivering and sleep was impossible. Just as dawn was breaking I happened to look out of the window and saw in the distance a mountainous coastline. We all agreed that this was Hawaii and were happy in thought that we would soon be warm. Drawing nearer we could see more and more electric lights which set us to wondering why there wasn't a black out. We soon found out, and our joy turned to sorrow when the Golden Gate Bridge loomed up in the front of us. Andrews was glad to see land no matter what it was. He had been pretty sick during the night. Only after landing did the Navigator tell us that during the night they had hit ahead wind of over 60 miles per hour and had been forced to turn back. The next two days weren't much fun, for all of our belongings remained on the plane preventing us from doing much of anything.

Dec. 28, 1942 – This is the night we were going to try it again and it proved to be a better trip. We took off at 8:30 p.m. Although it was as cold as the first night, we were better prepared for it. Each of us had brought along a heavy wool blanket. A short while after dawn we again spied a mountainous coastline and hoped to heaven it wasn't California again (Egad, but we were eager). There was no mistaking it though, it was Hawaii, and at 8:00 a.m. we landed at Hickham Field. The schedule called for an immediate take-off after refueling, but a hydraulic leak was discovered which grounded the plane until the following day. Needless to say this made us very happy as it would give us a chance to go into Honolulu. Arriving in Honolulu after a short 15-minute bus ride, we decided to get a hotel room where we could all take a shower. (All includes John Gibbs, Max Mayer, Hook Ream, B.G. Andrews and Lewis, and of course, myself.) The first hotel wanted \$9 for a room with bath, and even though we explained that we only wanted the room for a few hours to wash up, the price remained the same. The second hotel only wanted \$6, which from that hotel was nothing short of a hold up. We were all pretty messy, so chipping in a dollar apiece, we took it. All prices in Hawaii seemed to be on the same scale and it knocked us for a loop to see the very high prices on such rotten stuff. One reason for this is due to the overpaid civilian war workers who are living off the fat of the land there. But Honolulu wasn't the place we imagined it to be, so after a brief look around the city with a short tun out to Waikiki Beach, which also left us cold, we returned to Hickham Field. That night we ate at the officer's club. The club was a honey, being even better than the one at Eglin Field. We all dropped about \$25 in the slot machines and Andrews, Lewis and Max lost over \$200 with the dice. It was while we were at the officer's club that evening that my felt cap vanished. It wasn't the first time that it had disappeared, because every cap looks like the next. It wasn't the cost of the thing that made me mad, but the fact that I had just managed to get it broken in so that it felt right. Also the knowledge that I wouldn't be

able to get another one until I returned to the States. And from where I was standing that looked like a long time. (From where I am standing now it looks like a longer time.) I returned to the club early the next morning to see if any hat had been left. All I could find was a Frank Buck sun helmet, which while far from being as good as the one I had lost, I took, having no other hat to wear at the time. Right after breakfast that a.m. we took off again, a major and a colonel joining us. That afternoon at 5:30 p.m. (Dec. 30, 1942) we landed at Canton Island, which is nothing more than an overgrown coral reef hundred of miles from nowhere. While there is really nothing at all on this small island, I believe I would rather be stationed there than anywhere else in the South Pacific. Reason for this is the lack of bugs due to the constant breeze and the absence of tropical growth. The food is as good as it is anywhere in this war zone and the entire island has a good clean look about it. There is only one tree on the island, a palm tree that was imported for use as a camouflaged lookout tower. Neither is there a lump of soil on the island, the whole being a mass of white coral. Next morning we were again delayed from leaving on schedule, but bad weather this time. Having nothing to do and the entire day to do it in, Max and myself decided to draw surf rods from supply and spend the day fishing. About all we could catch, we were told, would be sharks. This only made us more eager, and off down the beach we started. Much to our disappointment we soon found that we wouldn't even be able to cast a line because running all around the island was a coral reef about 150 feet offshore. It was too shallow in front of the reef and we had no way of getting out beyond it. We didn't like the idea of wading out to the reef in short pants because of the many varieties of small fish swimming around with the kiss of death. That night was New Year's Eve, and the officers of the island were kind enough to share their small amount of liquor with us. We didn't want to take advantage of their generosity, so after one or two drinks each we returned to our quarters. We were all in bed by 9:00 p.m. and before going to sleep we talked for some time about other New Year's Eves we had seen and of what the folks back home might be doing. Of course we all got the old longing for home, which is stronger than ever at moments like that, and we all vowed that this time next year we would all be home. (Something I have my doubts about now.) The next morning, Jan. 1, 1943, we took off for the Fiji Islands and arrived there during the mid-afternoon. There wasn't much at Fiji, and although we went into a local town, we didn't stay any length of time. In Fiji, as in Australia, a cold drink is one which is served 1° cooler than room temperature. The people of Fiji don't know any better; the Aussies just don't give a damn. It seemed that half the American fleet was anchored in the harbor at Fiji. Besides tankers and transports, there were five battleships with escort. Up to this time I didn't believe that we had that many battleships in the whole Pacific area. They had a nice club there and while I wasn't too impressed at the time, I know that it would look like paradise now. We all managed to pick up a few words of the language, some of which are as follows: "Bulah," a greeting like hello; "Bulah Manocka" means almost the same as the first, only this is an extra friendly greeting; "Say Taboo Icke," means Stop! Stay out! (Sounds like double talk to me). Very early the next morning we took off for New Caledonia, landed about 11:00 a.m., ate lunch, refueled the airplane, and by 12:00 noon we were on our way again for Brisbane, Australia, where we landed at Amberley Field. Our stay here was very brief, lasting only two days. I never did get a chance to get into the city of Brisbane, but I did manage to get into a nearby town called Ipswich. I believe it was Jan. 2 that we were called out at midnight and taken to the train station at Brisbane. That was a wild ride in a GI truck. It was raining and pitch black, and we had to get there quick to catch a train. Our train turned out to be a cattle car of the first order. I guess it was pretty modern by their standards, but after the Pullmans of the States, it sure looked sad. The ride up to Townsville was one of the worst I have ever taken in a train. We were packed in pretty tight, and though we tried, we couldn't get any sleep. It was a problem to eat and we didn't do much of it. Somewhere around the 6th we arrived in Townsville and were stationed at Garbutt Field. We didn't appreciate Townsville much. I guess we should have come up to New Guinea first. It was that sort of place. Not much there, but better than nothing. The officer's club was a sore spot with us. Hospitality was unheard of and they went out of their way to clip us. Not to mention the fact that it was run like a Boy Scout Camp. It was here in Townsville that we learned what was to become of us. No one seemed to want us and no one

knew what to do with us. They had more crews than they needed for the B-26s so it was decided, by what method I don't know, to split our group up and send us to different outfits. Some went to B-24s, some to B-25s, and the rest of us to B-17s. After staying there for two weeks, we were again put on a northbound cattle car and after an overnight ride we arrived in Mareeba. There we learned that the 43rd Bomb Group, which we were to join, had just left for New Guinea. We stayed in Mareeba a little over a week and at last were able to get transportation to New Guinea. Sarsfield, Wiesner, and Emerick went up first, so that when I arrived a few days later, they had their tent all fixed up and I was able to stay with them until Gibbs and Mayer showed up. Day after day went by and no sign of Gibbs and Mayer. Then one night about a week later, on February 8th, they arrived during a tropical downpour. Every day after that we were on the go all the time fixing up our tent. The first day was the hardest. We spent the entire day in blinding sun digging a platform from the side of a hill and putting the tent up there. By nightfall we were dead tired and good for nothing but plenty of sleep. The second day we were all pretty stiff but went ahead and built a clothes rack. Under the circumstances, what we had to work with and all, none of this was too easy. The third day we managed to borrow a portable flame thrower and burned all the grass around our tent. Following this I built a shelf for all our small things. We each built a chair and we spent almost a whole day digging a slit trench. The last was brought about by an air raid alarm sounded the night before. Lucky for us none of the Nips came over, but then and there we made up our minds to dig that slit trench the next day. Along with a few other things we did, that brings me up to date.

When I first arrived here the mess hall was nothing but a wood frame. It remained that way for over two weeks pending the arrival of more building materials. Now they are starting to build a roof, which makes eating more enjoyable during the rainy weather. Screens have also arrived, and soon we will no longer have to share our meals with the flies. A word on the food is PHOOEY. A few days a week we may have fresh mutton and string beans. About once a week we are lucky to get a few slices of tomato or cucumber. 99% of the time we have bully beef. As yet I haven't been behind the wheel of a B-17. Jack Wiesner, bombardier, was on the Rabaul raid last night. It was the biggest raid yet pulled. Forty-eight planes returned and no one was hurt bad. Each plane carried twenty 100-lb. demolitions, forty 20-lb. frags and eighty incendiaries.

Feb. 15, 1943 – Last night another big raid was pulled on Rabaul. Not quite as many planes went as on the first night. I am told that the weather was pretty bad and the ack ack was even worse. A few of the planes were hit but no one was hurt badly, and all returned. J.K. was also on this raid. Today I haven't done a thing. Little chance of a Jap raid tonight. It's been raining all day.

Feb. 16, 1943 – Didn't do much of anything all day. At 11:00 p.m., just as I was about to fall asleep, the C.Q (Charge of Quarters) walked into the tent and informed me that I was to be O.D. (Officer of the Day). I had to jump up and make an immediate inspection of the guard on the airplanes and then another one at 3:00 a.m. Didn't get much sleep at all.

Feb. 17, 1943 – This afternoon I went into Port Moresby with Russ Emerick. It was the first time I had been into the "city," and was well prepared to expect nothing. That was just what I found. There is nothing there but a harbor and a row of warehouses. Quite a few cargo ships were in the harbor and a few small navy boats. I had a few sad tasting soft drinks at the officer's club, then returned to the field. That one trip was enough to last me for the duration. When I got back to the field, I found that Max Mayer and Jack Wiesner had left for a mission to Bougainville in the Solomons. Looks like some sort of a sea and air battle coming up there.

Feb. 20, 1943 – I found out this morning that when the planes arrived at Bougainville last night it was solid overcast down to the water, so the bombs were dropped on a small Jap airdrome up there. Last night they stuck me with O.D. again because I missed roll call at breakfast. This afternoon I had my first ride behind the wheel of a B-17. I went up with Lt. Progar to test flight a plane that was said to be out of line. Late this evening we had an air raid alarm sound. It was raining hard out and all the slit trenches were full of water, so we were hoping the Japs wouldn't show up. They didn't, and in half an hour the all clear came.

trenches were full of water, so we were hoping the Japs wouldn't show up. They didn't, and in half an hour the all clear came.

Feb. 21, 1943 – Didn't do much today. Read most of Bromfield's "Wild is the River," not a bad book. This evening about 10:00 p.m. I went through my first air raid on the ground. One, or perhaps two, Jap planes flew nearby the field flying very high. There was a solid overcast about 3,000 feet so the searchlights couldn't pick them up. However, the radar AA was in action for a short while. I don't believe any bombs were dropped. About 11:00 p.m. another alarm was sounded, and again we dove into our clothes. We sat outside the slit trench until we could hear the drone of the planes and the AA let go. This plane, or planes, came a lot closer than the first and a lot more AA was fired. I don't believe any bombs were dropped this time either, and the planes soon went. We were all set for another raid, thinking that the next one would be a honey, but no more alarms were sounded.

Feb. 22, 1943 – Today, at long last, I have been assigned to a combat crew. Lt. J.E. Hensler, who just got checked out, is my pilot. Lucien, bombardier, and Hanlon, navigator. We went up for five hours today practicing bombing runs. Max was up with us dropping them and Gibbs was alternating as co-pilot with his pilot Lt. Crawford. This evening we had an alarm lasting three minutes. No Nips came over. There hasn't been any water all day. I sat up until midnight waiting for it to go on, but no luck. Six of our planes went over to Rabaul tonight. Max and Gibbs went along.

Feb. 23, 1943 – First thing I did this a.m. was to go down and take a shower. There was enough water to take a shave too. Guess I'm lucky. Max got back early this a.m. from the raid, but Gibbs's plane ran low on gas and had to set down at Hood Point. They went up for them this afternoon and Gibbs got back here at 6:00 p.m.

Feb. 24, 1943 – I didn't get up for breakfast again. Neither did Max. They nabbed Max for O.D. because of it. I guess they'll get me tomorrow. Flew for two and a half-hours this afternoon with Capt. Crommer checking the beam. We had our crew pictures taken today. Don't think the Nips will be over.

Feb. 25, 1943 – Listened this a.m. to a lecture on current events given by a fellow who didn't know much more about it than we did. This afternoon we worked on the officer's club, giving it its finishing touches. The grand opening will be this Sunday night and we should have something up there to drink. (I hope so.) Thought I'd be going out on a mission tonight, but looks like I'm not. Emerick, Wiesner, Mayer, and maybe Gibbs are going. Guess the Nips won't show up. It's raining again.

Feb. 27, 1943 – Played poker today for the first time since I joined the army. Lost £10 in one hour. Borrowed the supply jeep this afternoon and drove into the Q.M. (Quartermaster) in Moresby. It was a wild ride over a rotten road.

Feb. 28, 1943 – Scheduled for my first mission today, a recon. Hung around all day waiting to fly. At 7:30 p.m. we had a grand feed in the mess hall to celebrate the opening of our officer's club. Right after this we went up to the club. Cigars were passed out, and they had Cokes and even ice. They had a lot of Australian whiskey, but as I was still on the alert for the recon I only had a couple and went off to bed at 10:30.

Mar. 1, 1943 – I never was called to go on the recon, but was just as glad of the fact that had been scheduled. The other fellows went to town on the stuff last night and were all in sad shape today. This evening Operations called everyone in the squadron on the alert. Six planes were going out at dawn to bomb a convoy south of Rabaul heading for Lae. I was scheduled to fly with Capt. Williams and was all hepped up about it. It seems that they are sending every plane we have against this convoy. All the bombers, B-25s, A-20s and P-38s are going to be there.

To be continued.

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

Miriam Fletcher from Lexington Park, MD, and widow of the late 65th Pilot **Arthur "Bud" Fletcher** on August 6, 2001. Reported by **Sam Commons**. God Bless

Cyrus Michaels Headquarters Squadron from Philadelphia, PA. Reported by his wife. God Bless.

Robert B. Murphy 63rd Navigator from San Jose, CA. Reported by his wife **Mary**. God Bless.

Betty Pettus from Virginia and widow of the late **James T. Pettus**, 43rd CO. Reported by the son of **James**. God Bless.

Joseph "Joe" Shapuras 65th from Largo, FL, April 13, 2001. Reported by his wife **Eleanor**. God Bless.

Charles D. Stewart 65th from Ridge, NY, April 14, 2001. Reported by his wife **Lorraine**. God Bless.

Edmond L. Troccia 65th Intelligence from Poughkeepsie, NY, April 18, 2001. Reported by his wife **Johanna** and Mrs. **Ross**. God Bless.

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

One Sunday morning the pastor noticed little Alex was staring up at the large plaque that hung in the foyer of the church. The plaque was covered with names, and small American flags were mounted on either side of it. The seven-year old had been staring at the plaque for some time, so the pastor walked up, stood beside the boy and said quietly, "Good morning, Alex."

"Good morning, pastor," replied the young man. Still focused on the plaque.

"Father McGee, what is this?" Alex asked.

"Well son, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service."

Soberly, little Alex asked, "Which service, the 9:00 or the 11:00?"

Nicholas Arabinko, 64th Pilot from Punta Gorda, FL, sends this humor dedicated to all those retired colonels in our association.

Four retired veterans are walking down the street. When they see a sign that says "Veterans Bar," they go in. The Bartender asks what they will have and they all ask for a martini.

He delivers the drinks and says, "That will be 40 cents." They can't believe their good luck. They finish the drinks and order another round and the bartender again says, "that will be 40 cents." This whets their curiosity, so they ask the bartender, "How can you afford to serve martinis for a dime apiece?"

The bartender replies, "I guess you've seen the décor here. Well, I am a retired Navy Master Chief Boatswain's Mate, and I have always wanted to own a bar. Last year I hit the lottery for \$45 million and decided to open this place for real veterans. Every drink costs a dime – wine, liquor, beer all the same."

The men notice four guys at the end of the bar who haven't ordered anything. They ask, "What's with them?" The bartender says, "Oh, those are retired Air Force Colonels, they're waiting for happy hour."

An elderly man in Phoenix calls his son in New York and says, "I hate to have to tell you that your mother and I are divorcing; forty-five years of misery is enough."

"Pop, what are you talking about?" the son screams.

"We can't stand the sight of each other any longer," the old man says. "We're sick of each other, and I'm sick of talking about this, so you call you sister in Chicago and tell her."

Frantic, the son calls his sister, who explodes on the phone. "Like heck they're getting divorced, she shouts, "I'll take care of this."

She calls Phoenix immediately, and screams at the old man, "You are **NOT** getting divorced. Don't do a single thing until I get there. I'm calling my brother back and we'll both be there tomorrow. Until then, don't do a thing. **DO YOU HEAR ME?**" and hangs up.

The old man hangs up his phone and turns to his wife. "Okay," he says, "They're coming for Thanksgiving and paying their own fares. Now what do we do for Christmas?"

For those of you over 65 years of age.

Aging:

Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

Don't let anyone tell you that you are getting old. Squash their toes with your rocker!

The older we get the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.

Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know "why" I look this way.

I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved.

Maturity means being emotionally and mentally healthy, it is that time when you know when to say "yes" and when to say "no," and when to say "WHOOPIE!"

The golden years are really metallic years, gold in the tooth, silver in your hair and most of all lead in the pants.

Life would be infinitely happier if we could only be born at the age of 80 and gradually approach 18.

Being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.

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.**

The Post Office department will not forward the Newsletter. If you have a change of address, please send BILL WILSON, Treasurer, this change as soon as possible.

REUNION INFORMATION

MUSIC CITY, U.S.A.
Nashville, Tenn.
28 October-4 November 2001

Our Reunion hotel the Radisson at OPRYLAND is located in an urban area that has many restaurants nearby. Shoney's, Cracker Barrel, Bob Evans, McDonald's, Appleby's (inside the Radisson), Cock of The Walk, (one mile), Spanish (0.5 mile), and a wide variety of restaurants and lounges, thirty unique shops, and nine areas of enclosed gardens and waterfalls across the street located inside OPRYLAND Hotel. Individuals may visit and tour anytime, or visit tour office in the SE corner of Radisson and join a tour group to go through on a guided tour. Trolley runs to all areas of the urban complex. Grand Ole Opry, Bell South Roy Acuff theater, Gibson Blue Grass theater, Nite Life, and The Nashville Palace are nearby.

The following is important information about reunion 2001 at Music City USA, Nashville, Tennessee. The Coordinator would be blessed and highly pleased, if every attendee if humanly possible, send registration with fee at least 1 (one) month prior to date of reunion (28 Sep 01). Transportation and meals has deadlines of payment if not met there is a penalty. THANKS.

RV Park is 1 (one) mile from Radisson Hotel. Park has pull thru parking available. MODEM hookup is available. Toll free number will be written upper right corner map that will come in a later newsletter.

SEE YOU IN THE VOLUNTEER STATE

Following are tours's available 2001, 43rd I B GRP Reunion.
Individuals will order (request) tours at Tel. 615-889-9490.
Pick up in front of hotel.

1) GRAND OLE NASHVILLE - 24.35

Approximately 3 hours

- See the homes of legendary stars, including Ronnie Milsap, Pam Tillis and the late Hank Williams, Minnie Pearl, Tammy Wynette, and Webb Pierce.
- Take a self-guided tour of the historic Ryman Auditorium®, inner home of the Grand Ole Opry® (Admission included in tour price.)
- See exciting points of interest including Fort Nashboro, Historic Second Avenue, the Capitol, Music Row, the Parthenon and the Governor's Mansion.

2) Country Legends - 22.72

Approximately 3 hours

- See the homes of the stars, including Reba McEntire, Porter Wagoner, Johnny Cash, Tracy Lawence, Lorrie Morgan, Ann Margret and late greats Roy Orbison, Conway Twitty and Roy Acuff.

3) Music Country - 23.26

Approximately 3 hours

- See the homes of the hot country stars, including Alan Jackson, Dolly Parton, Kix Brooks, Faith Hill, and Tim McGraw, Amy Grant, Alison Krauss, Lorianne Crook and the Little Jimmy Dickens.

4) Inside Music - 23.80

Approximately 3 hours

- See exciting points of interest: Historic Second Avenue, Fort Nashboro, Wildhorse Saloon® and the Ryman Auditorium.
- Learn about the booming Nashville music industry with a visit to Music Row and a recording studio.
- Admission to Country Music Hall of Fame included in the admission price.

5) Grand Ole Opry Studio - 8.65

Approximately 1 hour

- Go behind the scenes of the world famous Grand Ole Opry; stand where the Opry greats have performed; see backstage dressing rooms used by Opry stars; visit the studios where premiere TV shows are taped. You may even see an Opry Star! Then catch legends immortalized as you visit the Grand Ole Opry Museum.

6) Opryland Hotel Tour - Guided Tour 11.36

Approximately 1 1/2 hour

Couple - Free walk thru - NOT GUIDED

- Take a group tour of the Opryland Hotel, the world's largest hotel and convention center under one roof! Experience the charms of its lush gardens, winding river and cascading waterfalls, while learning fascinating tidbits about the spectacular hotel and it's features. Conclude your tour with a relaxing ride aboard a Delta River flatboat. (Involves extensive walking and some steep climbing.)

7) The Hermitage - 23.26

Approximately 3 hours

- Take a guided tour of the Hermitage, the beautifully restored mansion of President Andrew Jackson (Admission included in tour price.)
- Visit Tulip Grove, the historic home of Andrew Jackson Donelson, Jackson's private secretary and associate.
- The tour takes you by the Two Rivers Mansion, one of Nashville's stately, restored antebellum homes.

8) Historical Mansions - 23.80

Approximate 3 hours

Tour will feature 1 of the 2 mansions below:

- Belle Meade Mansion - Queen of Tennessee Plantations, former home of the Harding family. See one of the largest antique carriage collections in the South.
- Belmont Mansion - Former Home of Adelia Hayes. See what architectural historians call the most elaborate domestic space built in antebellum Tennessee.
- Both tours take you by The Parthenon, Centennial Park and the Bicentennial Mall.

THE YEAR 2001! REUNION OF THE 43rd BOMB GROUP ASSOC.

Held at the Fantastic RADDISON HOTEL situated in the beautiful Hills, Rivers, and Valleys of Tennessee – the VOLUNTEER STATE.

28 October – 4 November 2001

OPRY LAND across the street has 15 (fifteen) restaurants and lounges. Nashville Palace and Acuff Theatre are nearby. Opry Mills, entertainment and commercial complex are also nearby.

29 Oct. – 3 Nov.

Registration Monday to Saturday: 9:00AM – 12:00 Noon. Adjacent Steps to Atrium

Additional Registration times: 4:00 PM – 5 PM Sunday (Oct. 28); Thursday (Nov. 1) 4:00 – 5:00 PM; Friday (Nov. 2) 6:30 – 7:30 AM and 4:00 – 5:00 PM.

Hospitality Room and Memorabilia Room – Bellvue Room 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Wednesday, 31 Oct.

Board of Directors meeting at 8:00 PM – Donelson Room

Thursday, 1 Nov.

Golf day. 8:00 AM Golfers meet in Motel Lobby

7:00 PM Squadron Meetings.

63rd – Donelson Room “A”

64th – Brentwood Room

65th & Headquarters Sqd. – Donelson Room “B”

403rd – McGavock Room

8:00 PM – Ladies Program – McGavock Ballroom

Friday, 2 Nov.

6:30 AM – 8:00 AM Continental Breakfast

9:00 AM – Depart for Hermitage

Arrive at Hermitage at 9:40 AM. Tour takes 2 hours. Return to Motel

5:00 PM – ‘til? Cocktail party, dinner and entertainment and dance

5:00 – 6:30 PM Cocktail party – ATRIUM (Cash Bar)

6:30 – 9:30 PM Dinner and Dance. Dress Country/Western (Casual) in the McGavock Room

Saturday, 3 Nov.

7:30 AM – 9:00 AM Breakfast Buffet (Country) McGavock Room

9:30 AM – 12:00 Noon Group Meeting – McGavock Room

5:00 PM – 6:30 PM Cocktail Hour – ATRIUM (Cash Bar)

6:30 PM – 10:00 PM Banquet Dinner & Dance – McGavock Room

Sunday, 4 Nov.

8:30 AM – Memorial Service – McGavock Room

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM Farewell Brunch – McGavock Room